

₹ 10.00

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

*or* AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



**November 2012**

Vol. 117, No. 11

# THE ROAD TO WISDOM

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON *Divine Love – II*



**T**HERE is one more human representation of the divine ideal of love. It is known as Madhura, sweet, and is the highest of all such representations. It is indeed based on the highest manifestation of love in this world, and this love is also the strongest known to man. In this sweet representation of divine love God is our husband. We are all women; there are no men in this world; there is but One man, and this is He, our Beloved. All that love which man gives to woman, or woman to man, has here to be given up to the Lord.

All the different kinds of love which we see in the world, and with which we are more or less playing merely, have God as the one goal; but unfortunately, man does not know the infinite ocean into which this mighty river of love is constantly flowing, and so, foolishly, he often tries to direct it to little dolls of human beings. The tremendous love for the child that is in human nature is not for the little doll of a child; if you bestow it blindly and exclusively on the child, you will suffer in consequence. But through such suffering will come the awakening by which you are sure to find out that the love which is in you, if it is given to any human being,

will sooner or later bring pain and sorrow as the result. Our love must, therefore, be given to the Highest One who never dies and never changes, to Him in the ocean of whose love there is neither ebb nor flow. Who in this universe is fitter to be loved than He? So let Him be the husband, let Him be the Beloved.

Aspire after that kiss of the Beloved, that touch of His lips which makes the Bhakta mad, which makes a man a god. To him, who has been blessed with such a kiss, the whole of nature changes, worlds vanish, suns and moons die out, and the universe itself melts away into that one infinite ocean of love. That is the perfection of the madness of love.

Ay, the true spiritual lover does not rest even there; even the love of husband and wife is not mad enough for him. The Bhaktas take up also the idea of illegitimate love, because it is so strong; the impropriety of it is not at all the thing they have in view. The nature of this love is such that the more obstructions there are for its free play, the more passionate it becomes.

---

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 3.96.



RP - Sanjiv Goenka  
Group



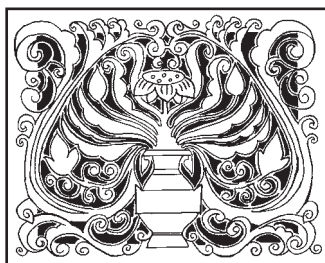


# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

Vol. 117, No. 11  
November 2012



Amrita Kalasha

#### EDITORIAL OFFICE

Prabuddha Bharata  
Advaita Ashrama  
PO Mayavati, Via Lohaghat  
Dt Champawat · 262 524  
Uttarakhand, India  
E-mail: prabuddhabharata@gmail.com  
pb@advaitaashrama.org

#### PUBLICATION OFFICE

Advaita Ashrama  
5 Dehi Entally Road  
Kolkata · 700 014  
Tel: 91 · 33 · 2264 0898 / 2264 4000  
2286 6450 / 2286 6483  
E-mail: mail@advaitaashrama.org

#### INTERNET EDITION AT:

www.advaitaashrama.org

Cover photo: 'Sakura'  
by Hisashi Matsuzaki

## Contents

Traditional Wisdom	529
This Month	530
<i>Editorial: From Captivity to Absolute Liberty</i>	531
Free Will and Determinism in Vedanta	533
<i>Prof. Arun Chatterjee</i>	
Environmentalism in India	540
<i>Rita Roy Chowdhury</i>	
<i>Lokasamgraha: The Social Ideal</i>	546
of the Bhagavadgita	
<i>Sandhya P Nair</i>	
Conflict and Its Solution	549
in Indian Philosophy	
<i>Phromphisit Phanchan</i>	
Leadership Excellence:	553
Vivekananda's Perspective	
<i>Dr Koustab Ghosh</i>	
Swami Vivekananda's Vision of Humankind	557
<i>Dr R Lekshmi</i>	
Eternal Words	562
<i>Swami Adbhutananda</i>	
<i>Svarajya Siddhibi:</i>	568
Attaining Self-dominion	
<i>Gangadharendra Saraswati</i>	
Reviews	572
Reports	574

# Subscribe to Prabuddha Bharata

- Become a Patron Subscriber and support the rich legacy left to all of us by Swami Vivekananda; patrons' names are published in *Prabuddha Bharata*.
- *Prabuddha Bharata* subscribers receive 10% discount on all Advaita Ashrama Publications.
- Send remittances in favour of *Prabuddha Bharata* by bank draft or money order to Advaita Ashrama, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India.  
Or, **subscribe online** at [www.advaitaashrama.org](http://www.advaitaashrama.org).
- Please note that we do not accept cheques.

<u>Subscription Rates</u>	<i>India &amp; Nepal</i>	<i>Sri Lanka &amp; Bangladesh</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>European Union</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>
Annual	₹ 100	₹ 1,100	£ 18	€ 25	\$ 30 (USD)
Three Years	₹ 280	₹ 3,200	£ 50	€ 70	\$ 85
Life (20 years)	₹ 1,200	—	—	—	—
Patron (25 years)	₹ 2,000	—	—	—	—

<u>Rates for online payment</u> at <a href="http://www.advaitaashrama.org">www.advaitaashrama.org</a> (by credit / debit card via PayPal)				
	<i>India &amp; Nepal</i>	<i>Sri Lanka &amp; Bangladesh</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>	
Annual	(USD)	\$ 3	\$ 28	\$ 32
Three Years	(USD)	\$ 7.5	\$ 83	\$ 90
Life (20 years)	(USD)	\$ 30	—	—
Patron (25 years)	(USD)	\$ 50	—	—

(Rates in foreign currencies depend on current exchange rates and are therefore subject to change without notice)

## Information for Subscribers

- Moving to a new address? Please let our Kolkata office know at least a month in advance so that your copy moves too.
- The number on the top line of your address label is your subscription number: please quote this number when writing to us. The month and year on the same line is the last month of your subscription.
- Subscriber copies are dispatched on the first or second day of every month. If you do not receive your copy by the last week of the month, please let us know so that we can send another copy.
- Renew your subscription online through our website.

## Information for Contributors

- Unpublished original articles of universal and higher human interests pertaining to religion, spirituality, philosophy, psychology, education, values, and other social topics coming from competent writers of any country are considered for publication in *Prabuddha Bharata*.
- Articles should not exceed 2,500 words. Paucity of

space precludes acceptance of longer articles for publication, except in rare cases. Articles must be submitted in typed—and preferably electronic—form.

- For all quotations in articles, adequate references—including name of author, title/publication, publisher with address, year of publication, and page number(s)—should be provided. Internet references should include name of author, website publisher, date, and *full* URL.
- The Editor does not accept responsibility for views expressed in any articles.
- Unsolicited articles are not individually acknowledged. The Editor will contact the contributor if an article is taken up for publication. E-mail addresses should be furnished where possible.
- The Editor reserves the right to accept, reject, or effect necessary changes in articles on which no correspondence is possible.
- *Prabuddha Bharata* does not undertake to return unsolicited materials.
- Articles published in *Prabuddha Bharata* cannot be reproduced elsewhere without written permission from the Managing Editor.



# You know

how important

**Prabuddha Bharata** is

in spreading the spiritual nectar of the Ramakrishna movement, the invigorating ideas of Vedanta, and the insights of Indian values and culture. *Prabuddha Bharata* also brings you inspirational reading material on a wide variety of topics of global interest.

You value this journal and the cause it represents, and would surely like to share it with others.

*How you can contribute:*

- **Gift** subscriptions to your friends and family, and encourage your thinking friends to subscribe.
- **Sponsor** a subscription for a worthy library or institution known to you, or let us choose one.
- **Contribute** to the **Prabuddha Bharata Permanent Fund** and help ensure the longevity of the journal.
- **Advertise** your company in the *Prabuddha Bharata* and encourage your colleagues to do so.



**PRABUDDHA  
BHARATA**  
or AWAKENED INDIA

*Send to:*

**Advaita Ashrama  
5 Dehi Entally Road  
Kolkata 700 014**

*Yes, I would like to*

- ☐ **Gift** \_\_\_\_\_ *life subscriptions to Prabuddha Bharata at ₹ 1200 each*
- ☐ **Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_ *libraries and institutions for 20 years at ₹ 1200 each*
- ☐ **Donate** ₹ \_\_\_\_\_ *to the Prabuddha Bharata Permanent Fund*

*Amount of ₹ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed herewith by draft / money order*

PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS

*Send my gift subscriptions to:*

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

PIN \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Details of DD \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A black and white photograph showing a group of students in a library. Some are sitting at a long table, writing in notebooks, while others are standing and looking at books on shelves in the background.

SHARE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE !

GIFT PRABUDDHA BHARATA TO LIBRARIES !

**PRABUDDHA BHARATA LIBRARY INITIATIVE**

**L**et many more benefit from the thought-provoking contents read by you every month in *Prabuddha Bharata*. Join the Prabuddha Bharata Library Initiative by gifting a life subscription to a library. You can either gift it to the library of your choice or to the library selected by us. Your name, along with the name of the library you sponsor, will be published in the Prabuddha Bharata. Come, sponsor as many libraries as you can and spread the ethos of Indian Culture.

***Prabuddha Bharata Library Initiative:***

***Name of Sponsor***

- 130. Rupali Guha Choudhury, Kolkata
- 131. Anup Sankar Bhaduri, Kolkata
- 132. Haresh C Dholakia

***Beneficiary Library***

- Sri Aurobindo Pathamandira, Kolkata.
- Arun Sankar Bhaduri Balika Vidyalaya, Sonapur.
- Sri Vijayrajji Library, Bhuj-Kutch.

***Prabuddha Bharata Patron Subscribers:***

- 447. Raj Nath Bhat, Varanasi.
- 448. Arun Kumar E S, Bengaluru.

PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

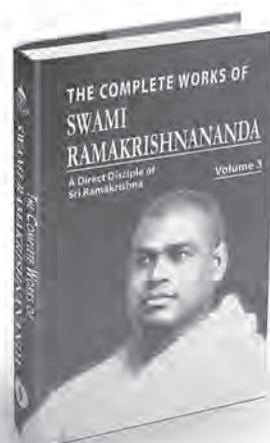
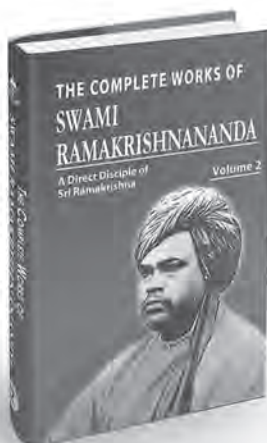
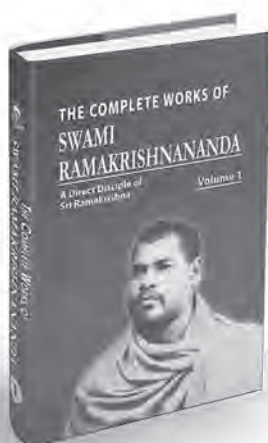
---

---

---

Swami Ramakrishnananda's 150th Birthday Special Publication

# THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA



Swami Ramakrishnananda (Shashi Maharaj), a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna wrote and spoke on a wide range of subjects, besides penning numerous letters to monks and devotees. *The Complete Works of Swami Ramakrishnananda* in three volumes bring together all his available writings in English, with translations from Bengali and Sanskrit.

Hardbound. Vol. 1, Pp.xlii + 469. Vol. 2, Pp.v + 462, and Vol. 3, Pp.vi + 542.

**Price: Each Volume Rs.180/- , Complete Set (3 volumes) Rs.540/-**  
+ Postage (by registered packet): Rs. 30/- for single volume, Rs.40/- for two volumes and Rs.50/- for the complete set. *No request for VPP entertained.*



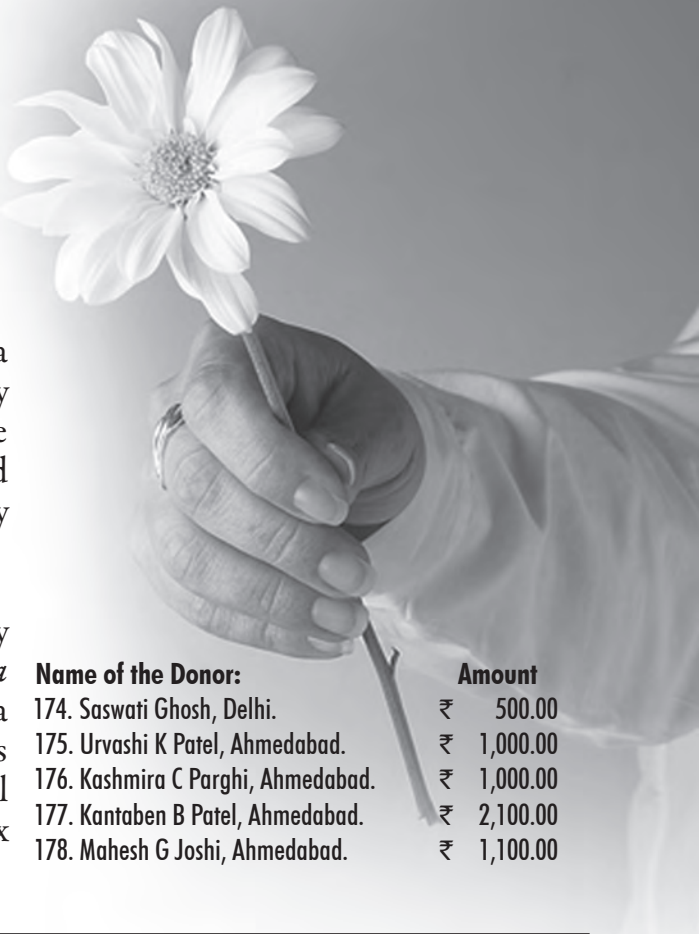
**Published by**  
Sri Ramakrishna Math,  
Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004  
Email: [mail@chennaiamath.org](mailto:mail@chennaiamath.org)



## CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA CORPUS FUND!

Contribute your mite to the Prabuddha Bharata Corpus Fund and actively participate in this venture to propagate Indian culture, values, philosophy, and spirituality. Could there be a better way to show your appreciation?

You can send your contributions by cheque or drafts favouring 'Prabuddha Bharata' to 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700014, India or make your donations online at [www.advaitaashrama.org](http://www.advaitaashrama.org). All donations are exempt from Income tax under section 80G.



### Name of the Donor:

174. Saswati Ghosh, Delhi.  
175. Urvashi K Patel, Ahmedabad.  
176. Kashmira C Parghi, Ahmedabad.  
177. Kantaben B Patel, Ahmedabad.  
178. Mahesh G Joshi, Ahmedabad.

### Amount

- ₹ 500.00  
₹ 1,000.00  
₹ 1,000.00  
₹ 2,100.00  
₹ 1,100.00

## Vivekananda in Europe

by Swami Vidyatmananda



Swami Vivekananda travelled widely across the world. Many places left a deep impression on him, particularly Europe. His presence too evinced lot of interest among the Europeans which sowed the seeds for the furtherance of Indian thought there. Distanced by time, we have lost many buildings and sites which are no longer in the form they were in during Swami Vivekananda's visit. This book is an attempt to trace his route across Europe and to find out the changes in the places that have taken place since then. The content of this book appeared as a series of articles in the English journal of the Ramakrishna Order, Prabuddha Bharata, intermittently from March 1967 to April 1977, and are a result of painstaking research by Swami Vidyatmananda.

Pages 304 | Price ₹ 100  
Packing & Postage: ₹ 40



Please write to:

**ADVAITA ASHRAMA, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India**

Phones: 91-33-22644000 / 22640898 / 22866483, E-mail: [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)



# TRADITIONAL WISDOM

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत । *Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!*

## Soaring Above Desires

November 2012

Vol. 117, No. 11

स वा अयमात्मा ब्रह्म विज्ञानमयो मनोमयः प्राणमयश्चक्षुर्मयः श्रोत्रमयः  
पृथिवीमय आपोमयो वायुमय आकाशमयस्तेजोमयोऽस्तेजोमयः  
काममयोऽकाममयः क्रोधमयोऽक्रोधमयो धर्ममयोऽधर्ममयः  
सर्वमयस्तद्यदेतदिदमयोऽदोमय इति यथाकारी यथाचारी तथा भवति साधुकारी  
साधुर्भवति पापकारी पापो भवति पुण्यः पुण्येन कर्मणा भवति पापः पापेन ।  
अथो खल्वाहुः काममय एवायं पुरुष इति स यथाकामो भवति तत्क्रतुर्भवति  
यत्क्रतुर्भवति तत्कर्म कुरुते यत्कर्म कुरुते तदभिसंपद्यते ॥

That self is indeed Brahman, as also identified with the intellect, the mind and *prana*, with the eyes and ears, with earth, water, air, and *akasha*, with fire, and what is other than fire, with desire and the absence of desire, with anger and the absence of anger, with dharma and adharma, with everything—identified, in fact, with this (what is perceived) and with that (what is inferred). As it does and acts, so it becomes; by doing good it becomes good, and by doing evil it becomes evil—it becomes virtuous through good work and vicious through evil work. Others, however, say: ‘The self is identified with desire alone. What it desires, it resolves; what it resolves, it works out; and what it works out, it attains.’

(*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.4.5)

अथ य एष सम्प्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन  
रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यत एष आत्मेति होवाचेतदमृतमभयमेतद्ब्रह्मेति तस्य ह वा एतस्य  
ब्रह्मणो नाम सत्यमिति ॥

‘Then this one, who is fully serene, rising up from this body (and) reaching the highest light remains established in his true nature. This is the Atman. This is Immortal. This is beyond all fear. This is Brahman. Truth is the name of this Brahman, who is such.’ This is what he [the teacher] said.

(*Chhandogya Upanishad*, 8.3.4)

# THIS MONTH

Life is fragile, but becomes powerful and irrepressible when it asserts itself against nature's bondage. All struggles lead us **From Captivity to Absolute Liberty**.

The human consciousness is the playground of contradictory feelings of freedom and bondage. Arun Chatterjee, Professor Emeritus, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA, examines **Free Will and Determinism in Vedanta**.



Humankind is disastrously leaving deep carbon and other footprints all over the earth.

In **Environmentalism in India**

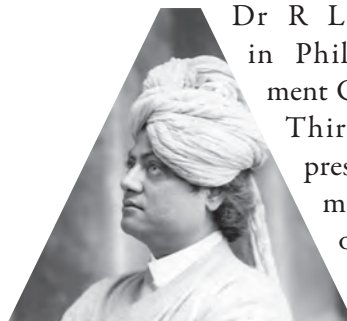
Rita Roy Chowdhury, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Vivekananda College for Women, Kolkata, shows how Indian tribal communities may have answers to modern problems.

Sandhya P Nair, Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, summarizes the concept of **Lokasamgraha: The Social Ideal of the Bhagavadgita**.

Ignorance of the Reality results in conflict, suffering, and pain. Phromphisit Phanchan, Research Scholar, University of Mysore, Mysore, discusses **Conflict and Its Solution in Indian Philosophy**.



In **Leadership Excellence: Vivekananda's Perspective** Dr Koustab Ghosh, Assistant Professor, Calcutta Business School, Kolkata, succinctly explains what real leadership entails in a world that lacks leaders with foresight, character, and self-sacrifice.



Dr R Lekshmi, Lecturer in Philosophy, Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram, presents a relevant and modern perspective on **Swami Vivekananda's Vision of Humankind**.

In the third part of **Eternal Words** Swami Adbhutananda speaks on faith, devotion, sadhana, and the attainment of perfection as well as the obstacles on the spiritual path. The swami's words are translated from *Sat Katha*, published by Udbodhan Office, Kolkata.



The eighth instalment of **Svarajya Siddhib: Attaining Self-dominion**, by the eighteenth century Gangadharendra Saraswati, fifteenth pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham, Kanchipuram, reaffirms that the knowledge of Brahman alone leads to liberation, not action.

# *From Captivity to Absolute Liberty*

**M**ANY PEOPLE do not agree that life is wonderful; they would say that it is ugly and miserable. As time, circumstances, or moods naturally change, the opinions of people also change. There are many common factors in the world; that is the reason why we can live together. There are also factors that may not be too common or that also overlap; that is why we need to adjust. Other factors such as wealth, education, culture, philosophy, and so on make us read the world in different ways. But by far the most important factor is the habit of projecting our mental world outside of ourselves. All these factors make us react differently and distinctly from others. Science also has shown that the world is not absolute but relative. With so much disagreement between individuals, we still believe in the static nature of people, places, and things. This is counter-intuitive and creates friction and difficulties. Our ignorance of the world and its relative nature keeps us, paradoxically, constantly engaged with ourselves. This is the first bondage.

There are moments when we want to reach out and touch the stars. Enthusiasm, hope, and ambition fuel our desires in order to make life meaningful and noticeable, but these moments pass and we sink back to the previous level of mediocrity. Life could be beautiful if it were not tied down to the basic needs of food, sleep, hygiene, and so on. Every satisfaction brings misery, joy brings sorrow, good brings bad. Besides, we feel spent after every emotion and mood that runs through us. Physical and mental fatigue

holds us back during any activity. We want to love, but later want to break away; and again want to return. Moreover, we also have diseases tugging at us all along. 'Each action has an equal and opposite reaction', this law is so patent and universal that we tend to overlook its importance in how everything is dictated. This is a world of checks and balances of unending conflicts and struggles. This is our second bondage.

We live in an environment in which we influence others and others influence us. A major part of our life is spent in accepting or fighting influences. Swami Vivekananda says: 'We are caught, though we came to catch. We came to enjoy; we are being enjoyed. We came to rule; we are being ruled. We came to work; we are being worked. All the time we find that out. And this comes into every detail of our life.' We want to influence the world but find nothing has changed. We are powerless to do anything and find that masses of people surging around are crushing and imprisoning us. Who and what influences us to what degree is unknown and unknowable. This is our third bondage.

'You do not see the same river twice', for the waters have moved on and fresh waters have filled it; yet we have the illusion that things are stable. In reality everything decays, disintegrates, and dies. It is our foolishness that makes us see order in disorder; there is no design or plan in nature, there is only chaos. Time devours everything and everyone, and then spits the whole thing out in quite a different form. There are no stable parameters and nothing about anything




can be predicted with certainty—it is all randomness. All the fine theories of free will and determinism are like a chimera. We try and find connections and coherence in order to justify what we see, but this does not satisfy our souls for long. Many seen and unseen factors are like shadows around objects and persons, constantly moulding them. This is the fourth bondage.

This is a world of karma and ‘we reap what we sow’. But this simple rule is very complicated because karma is *vyashti*, individual, and *samashti*, collective. My karma affects me as well as the place and people around me. As this collective karma grows, it affects the whole nation, and when this national karma becomes powerful it affects other nations and subsequently the whole world. Sri Ramakrishna gives an example about individual and collective karma: ‘A man was performing the shraddha ceremony at his house. He was feeding many people. Just then a butcher passed by, leading a cow to slaughter. He could not control the animal and became exhausted. He said to himself: “Let me go into that house and enjoy the feast of the shraddha ceremony and strengthen my body, then I shall be able to drag the cow along.” So he carried out his intention. But when he killed the cow, the sin of the slaughter fell also on the performer of the shraddha.’ The Bhagavadgita says that ‘the nature of karma is inscrutable’, and yet we have to work, for that is our nature. This is our fifth bondage.

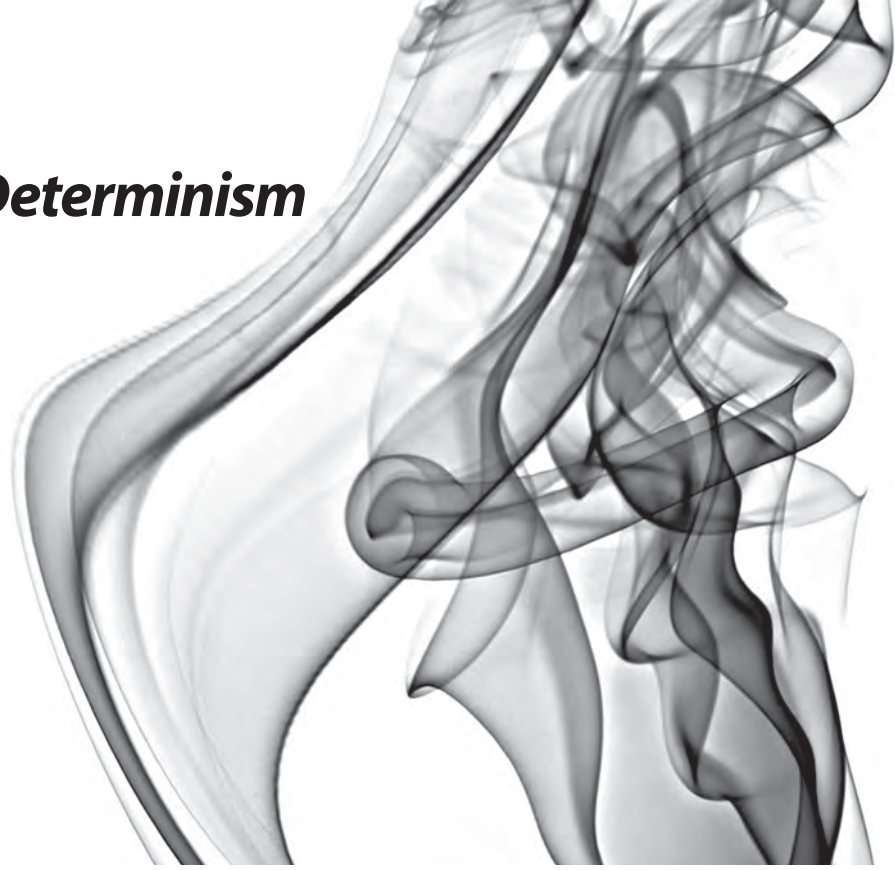
Over and above are our attachments. As we mature in life, we naturally give up attachments, but the attachment to our bodies is a terrible one. We irrationally cling to it. Even the act of suicide is due to the attachment to a body. Disease, grief, and so on makes us disgusted with our existence, but once these things pass, the old attachments reappear. There is also the most powerful attachment to our existence, which is reflected in the mind. We simply cannot

contemplate its extinguishment and are frightened at the loss of our sense of identity. We feel that everything will be lost forever in a void. This is the sixth bondage.

We would be totally wrong to conclude that bondages have just six categories or levels, for every thought, word, and deed binds us to the world. All these bondages swarm around and cling, as it were, to our sense of identity. In this sea of bonds if we can but break the sixth one, the personal identity, then all bondages would disappear. But this sixth cannot be easily broken. We may conclude that it is unfortunate to have a body at all, but the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi says: ‘My child you have been extremely fortunate in getting this human birth. Have intense devotion to God. One must work hard. How can one achieve anything without effort?’ The effort would be in the form of hauling us up from this whirlpool of bonds unto the solid ground of Reality, then captivity would appear like an illusion. But it is easier said than done. Swamiji says: ‘Superhuman power is not strong enough. Superdivine strength is the only way, the only way out.’ However, we know from metaphysics and from the teachings of great ones that the whole of nature is pushing us on to absolute liberty, to reveal to our captive minds our real identity, which is the Atman. Just like frightened people we are afraid to give up the false identity, so she is beating us into submission. Swamiji describes how: ‘With clenched hands, you want to take. But nature puts a hand on your throat and makes your hands open.’ The Atman—eternal, infinite, pure, and awakened—is of the very nature of freedom. Captivity is in nature; the Atman is absolute and hence beyond nature. Just as a butterfly develops in a cocoon and eventually breaks it to emerge free, so we develop the understanding of our absolute nature amidst a harsh captivity to finally break free. 

# Free Will and Determinism in Vedanta

Prof. Arun Chatterjee



FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM have been approached from different perspectives by Eastern as well as Western philosophers who believe in a soul and God, and even by materialists and atheists. These issues are not limited to philosophers and religious people, they are of common interest. I will not examine in this article all the aspects of free will and determinism, rather I will focus on the views of Vedanta philosophy from the perspective of an individual.

In the context of our discussion ‘determinism’ refers to the view that every event that has occurred in the past or is happening now is the result of a prior action, and that every action undertaken now will produce an effect in the future. Thus, according to determinism, every event is part of a causal chain. Philosophers differ in their opinion as to how rigidly the law of causality actually works in our lives, and in Western philosophy different expressions such as ‘hard determinism’ and ‘soft determinism’ are

used to represent variations of rigidity.

By ‘free will’ I refer here to our power to make a choice from alternative courses of actions available to us. We are considered to be using our free will when we decide to take a certain action based on our own intention, without any coercion from any source. It should be noted that though the word ‘freedom’ is also used in the same sense as ‘free will’, in some contexts ‘freedom’ refers to the environment or condition within which we act, and it covers a variety of situations, external as well as internal. External situations that can limit freedom may spring from the political, financial, and social environment. Examples of internal condition include one’s mental limitations, addiction, and habits.

There are six different schools of thought in Hindu philosophy: Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimamsa, and Vedanta. These schools do not hold exactly the same view with regard to certain aspects of determinism

and freedom, although all of them admit the concept of karma. Vedanta is considered the Hindu philosophy par excellence. My primary sources of Vedanta philosophy for this article are the Bhagavadgita and a few relevant verses from the Upanishads. I will also briefly present the views of two prominent Indian philosophers and scholars of Vedanta: Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. First I will examine the widely known doctrine of karma and then I will present the view of Vedanta.

### **The Doctrine of Karma**

The concept of determinism is represented in Hinduism by the doctrine of karma. The Sanskrit word 'karma' can mean either action or the consequence of an action, depending on the context it is used in. In Vedic literature karma means rituals. In the Upanishads karma is used in the sense of willed actions and also in the sense of the results of such actions. One of the earliest references to the doctrine of karma is found in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: 'One indeed becomes good by good action, evil by evil action.'<sup>1</sup> In the same Upanishad the idea of karma is also presented in this way: 'According as one acts, according as one behaves, so does one become. The doer of good becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil' (4.4.5).

The doctrine of karma is mentioned not only in Vedantic literature but also in the Puranas and the Itihasas, and there is a variety of ideas associated with this doctrine among common people. There are also some misconceptions regarding the concept of karma; for example, some people associate karma with fate. According to believers of fate, all events are predestined to happen. There is no universally agreed definition of what fate is; however, there is agreement that it is not the will of the supreme Divine. Commonly it is viewed as the will of a smaller or lesser god.

There are other words used in the same sense and these include *niyati* and *adrishta*, which also mean destiny or fate. Therefore, to equate karma with fate is wrong.

According to the doctrine of karma, every action has a consequence, which may or may not manifest immediately. The situation in which we find ourselves at a certain moment is the result of a chain of not only our past actions but of the actions of many others by whom we are surrounded. Further, the action that we undertake now will result in a consequence in the future. There is a common notion that karma is a precise system of reward and punishment based on the nature of our actions, but that is not true. Sri Aurobindo explained: 'If we touch fire, it burns, but there is no principle of punishment in this relation of cause and effect, it is a lesson of relation and a lesson of experience; so in all Nature's dealings with us there is a relation of things and there is a corresponding lesson of experience.'<sup>2</sup>

Karma is a cosmic law and is applicable to all grades of existence in the phenomenal world—the physical as well as the supra-physical worlds of life force, emotions, and mind. The rigidity with which the law of karma works depends on the grade of existence. At the physical level the law of karma is very deterministic and does not give room for freedom. On the other hand, at the mental level of human beings, where a higher level of consciousness operates, it seems that there is some room for freedom, and that is what the debate is about. In any case, the doctrine of karma does not absolve its agent from the moral responsibility with regard to his or her actions. Although it fully recognizes the effects of the past on the present, it does not deny us the possibility of choosing a particular course of action. This aspect of karma is explained by Dr. S Radhakrishnan, who wrote: 'The cards in



the game of life are given to us. We do not select them. They are traced to our past Karma, but we can call as we please, lead what suit we will, and as we play, we gain or lose. And there is freedom.<sup>3</sup> The same idea was conveyed by Swami Abhedananda: 'A believer in the law of *karma* is a free agent and is responsible for all the good and bad results of his own actions that attend to his life. He knows that he creates his own destiny, and moulds his character by his thoughts and deeds.'<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that the freedom that the law of karma offers is not granted to everyone automatically; the access to freedom requires one to act with a certain level of awareness, which all human beings do not have. We will examine this issue from the perspective of the Gita in the next section.

Before moving on I would like to mention that the doctrine of karma includes a variety of ideas, many of which are related to life after death and also rebirth. The doctrine recognizes that there are different types of karmas such as *prarabdha*, *sanchita*, *kriyamana*, and *agami*. The definitions of these types of karma and the explanation of how they operate can be found in the general literature on the doctrine of karma. However, these ideas are not mentioned in the Upanishads or the Gita, and therefore I will not discuss them in this article.

### Vedanta's Views

Vedanta admits determinism in the form of the doctrine of karma, according to which our actions bind us to a chain of causes and effects. Vedanta also admits the freedom of choice or free will. To understand these apparently conflicting views one must delve into a fundamental metaphysical concept of Vedanta, which is brought out clearly in the Gita. The Gita's view on determinism and freedom is based on the concept of Prakriti, nature, and Purusha, supreme Soul

or conscious Being. Prakriti, which makes up the phenomenal world, is subject to causal laws, while Purusha is essentially free. Further, the Gita and the Upanishads make a distinction between the true Soul, or higher Self, of an individual and the person's apparent soul, or lower self. The higher Self transcends nature, which constitutes the phenomenal world of time and space, and thus is free from nature's determinism. The apparent soul is *ahamkara*, the ego, and being constructed by nature is subject to its control. Ordinarily, we identify ourselves with our ego and become enslaved to nature and her modes or qualities, called *gunas*. We are driven by desires, and our will and actions are entirely determined by the causal laws of nature. In spite of that we generally feel and think that we are freely choosing our actions. In the words of the Gita: 'All the actions are being entirely done by the modes (*gunas*) of nature; the ego-deluded being regards his "I" as the doer.'<sup>5</sup>

The three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—bind us to our lower nature. In the Gita's words: '*Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are *gunas* born of Prakriti; they bind to the body the imperishable Dweller in the body' (14.5). Although it is not difficult to see how *tamas* and *rajas* limit our freedom, it may be difficult to see how *sattva* does it. However, the Gita is quite clear on this issue and points out that *sattva* too causes attachment to knowledge and happiness. The sense of ego does not disappear when a person acts in the mode of *sattva*.

To free oneself from the determinism of nature and its modes, one must clearly recognize the operation of the modes of nature. 'He who sees that all actions are in all ways done by Prakriti and also sees the Self as non-doer, he (truly) sees' (13.29). Next, one has to rise to a higher plane of existence and find one's higher Self, which is free. The concepts of the lower self

and the higher Self are presented in the Upanishads as well. There are two verses in the Upanishads that use the metaphor of two birds to refer to the lower self and the higher Self of an individual. The verses are as follows: 'Two birds, closely united companions, cling to the same tree. Of these two, one eats the sweet fruit (of the tree), (and) the other looks on without eating. On the same tree a person (individual soul), immersed (in ignorance) and deluded, grieves on account of his helplessness. When he sees the other, the Lord who is worshipped, and his greatness, he becomes freed from sorrow.'<sup>6</sup>

These verses describe the two states of an individual soul. One of the birds represents the soul involved in Prakriti, which the Gita refers to as the *kshara*, mutable. This *kshara* identifies itself with the ego and remains helplessly bound up in the actions of the *gunas* and the laws of causality. Trapped in Prakriti this soul forgets its higher nature, the Atman, which is represented by the other bird. The Atman is beyond the control of Prakriti, and the Gita refers to it as *akshara*, immutable. When ignorance is removed and one's ego is replaced by the higher Self, one gains liberation from the determinism of Prakriti and the laws of causality.

I should add that the concept of Prakriti and Purusha is found in both Sankhya and Vedanta philosophies, but there is a significant difference in their views regarding the relation between nature and Atman. Whereas Sankhya philosophy is dualistic and treats Prakriti and Purusha as two separate principles, Vedanta considers Prakriti and Purusha as two aspects of one principle, which is Brahman. Vedanta's Prakriti is the power inherent in Purusha and the driving force of the phenomenal world. In the manifested phenomenal world Purusha loses itself in the mutable Prakriti and it seems to change with the changes of nature. The Gita refers to the

Purusha hidden in the mutable lower Prakriti as *kshara* Purusha. Purusha in its aspect of pure Being, which transcends the lower Prakriti, is *akshara* Purusha, also called Atman.

There is another important difference between Sankhya and Vedanta as presented in the Gita with regard to the relation of Purusha and Prakriti. Sankhya's Purusha passively witnesses and sustains the actions of Prakriti, but it does not govern her actions. According to Sankhya, when Purusha withdraws its sanction Prakriti's actions come to an end. According to the Gita, Purusha is more than just a witness and consentor; it can also be Ishvara, the Lord and controller of nature.<sup>7</sup>

The Gita does not advocate that one should completely withdraw from action and remain merged in blissful inaction with *akshara* Purusha, the inactive silent Self. One indeed can become free from the determinism of nature by realizing the Atman; that is the path followed by 'the Sannyasin, who rejects the nature, the action altogether, so far at least as action can be rejected, so that there may be an unmixed undivided freedom; but that solution, though admitted, is not preferred by the Gita.'<sup>8</sup> According to the Gita, the first stage is to be united with the Self and remain unaffected by desire and passion, success and failure; but one must not stop there. Sri Krishna urges Arjuna to fight. The Gita wants us to be active in our life. The *Isha Upanishad* also recommends action: 'Verily, by doing works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. There is no other way for you but this. This way action does not stick to a man.'<sup>9</sup> But how can one act in the world and still remain free from determinism? To understand the Gita's answer to this question we must first understand the concepts of *kshara* Purusha, *akshara* Purusha, Purushottama, and the higher Prakriti or Para-Prakriti.

Some interpreters of Vedanta view the statuses of *kshara* and *akshara* Purushas as being the only two alternatives, which for them are mutually exclusive. The Gita does not accept that view and recognizes a third status, 'a supreme reality of the Soul's existence of which these are two contrary aspects, but which is limited by neither of them'.<sup>10</sup> This supreme Reality is the Gita's Purushottama: 'There are two Purushas in this world, the immutable (*akshara*) and the mutable (*kshara*); the mutable is all these beings, the high-seated consciousness (*kutas-tha*) is called the immutable (*akshara*). But other than these two is the highest spirit called the supreme Self (Purushottama), who enters the three worlds and upholds them, the imperishable Lord (Ishvara).'<sup>11</sup>

The Gita recognizes that to be free from the chain of causality one must attain the status of *akshara* Purusha and become *trigunatita*, superior to the three *gunas*; but *akshara* Purusha, the Atman, is silent and inactive—*akarta*, non-doer. Therefore, by reaching *akshara* Purusha one can liberate oneself from nature's determinism. To find the divine will one must go beyond *akshara* Purusha and unite one's whole being with Purushottama and Para-Prakriti, which is the executive force of Purushottama. The Gita refers to it: 'The five elements, the mind, reason, and the ego, comprise my eightfold divided nature. This is the lower. But know my other nature different from this, the supreme, which becomes the jiva (individual self) and by which the world is upheld' (7.4–5).

When one is able to unite one's whole being with Purushottama, one can find poise in *akshara* Purusha and be free from the control of Prakriti. One can also carry out one's work in the world as an instrument of the divine will, which is in Para-Prakriti. Purusha can change the motive of Prakriti's action and make it perform

selfless and desireless actions by unifying it with the divine will. Such work does not bind one to the causal chain.

To become egoless and find one's higher Self, which takes one beyond the determinism of nature, is not an easy task. However, the Gita presents a practical way: a triple path of knowledge, work, and devotion. According to the Gita, we must sincerely feel that the fruits of our actions belong not to us but to the Master of the world, Purushottama. We are to consecrate to Purushottama all our actions, thoughts, and feelings. We must see God everywhere and in everything, and also see everything residing in God. Thus, gradually, we can feel oneness with all beings and lose our egoistic self and selfish desires. Finally, we must lovingly make a complete surrender to Purushottama and his will. There are several verses in the Gita that describe how one should act in order not to accumulate adverse karma. Among these, the following two verses are perhaps the most revealing: 'Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer (in sacrifice), whatever you give, whatever spiritual austerities you perform, make it an offering to Me. Thus, you will be liberated from good and evil results, which constitute the bonds of action; with thy soul in union with the Divine through renunciation, you shall be free and attain Me' (9.27–8).

### **The Views of Two Great Scholars**

The views of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo on free will and determinism are very similar to those of the Gita. Both of them recognize the determinism of nature manifested in the phenomenal world of time and space. Swami Vivekananda used a forceful language to make the point that there is no free will or freedom from causality as long as we live an ordinary life dominated by nature. Referring to karma, or the law of causation, he said:



It is only when 'being' or existence gets moulded into name and form that it obeys the law of causation, and is said to be under law; because all law has its essence in causation. Therefore, we see at once that there cannot be any such thing as free will; the very words are a contradiction, because will is what we know and everything that we know is within our universe, and everything within our universe is moulded by the conditions of space, time, and causation.<sup>12</sup>

It is very important that we do not overlook the context in which Swami Vivekananda made this and similar statements, since they may give the idea that he did not believe in freedom under any circumstances. In fact, he made other statements in an equally forceful language emphasizing the ability of human beings to rise above the limits of nature and attain freedom from causality. For example, he said: 'The Vedanta says that Infinity is our true nature; it will never vanish, it will abide forever. But we are limiting ourselves by our Karma, which like a chain round our necks has dragged us into this limitation. Break that chain and be free. Trample law under your feet. There is no law in human nature, there is no destiny, no fate' (2.323). He pointed out that weakness is what leads us to believe in fate: 'We human beings are very slow to recognize our own weakness, our own faults, so long as we can lay the blame upon somebody else. Men in general lay all blame of life on their fellow-men, or, failing that, on God, or they conjure up a ghost, and say it is fate. Where is fate, and who is fate? We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate' (2.224). Swami Vivekananda makes a clear distinction between our phenomenal nature, which is determined by Prakriti and its *gunas*, and our Self, which is not bound by nature. His message is that we must find our true Self and

become free even while living our life on earth under any circumstances.

Sri Aurobindo too repeatedly points out that free will and determinism are not mutually exclusive, that one does not preclude the other. He commented: 'All is free-will or all is destiny—it is not so simple as that.'<sup>13</sup> He also pointed out: 'A certain absolute freedom is one aspect of the soul's relation with Nature at one pole of our complex being; a certain absolute determinism by Nature is the opposite aspect at its opposite pole; and there is also a partial and apparent, therefore an unreal eidolon of liberty which the soul receives by a contorted reflection of these two opposite truths in the developing mentality.'<sup>14</sup>

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy recognizes a gradation of consciousness that exists among various types of beings in the world, beginning with material objects and moving up to plants, animals, and human beings. He believes that the level of determinism varies according to the grade of consciousness. He wrote:

For practical purposes, on the surface there is an entire determinism in matter—though this is now disputed by the latest school of Science. As Life emerges a certain plasticity sets in, so that it is difficult to predict anything exactly as one predicts material things that obey a rigid law. The plasticity increases with the growth of Mind, so that man can have at least a sense of free-will, of a choice of his action, of a self-movement which at least helps determine circumstances. But this freedom is dubious because it can be declared to be an illusion, a device of Nature, part of its machinery of determination, only a seeming freedom or at most a restricted, relative and subject independence. It is only when one goes behind away from Prakriti to Purusha and upward away from Mind to spiritual Self that the side of freedom comes to be first evident and then,

by unison with the Will which is above Nature, complete.<sup>15</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo, ‘action does not bind or limit our true being at all. Action has no such effect on the spiritual Person or Purusha or on the psychic entity within us, it binds or limits only the surface constructed personality.’<sup>16</sup>

Sri Aurobindo believed strongly in divine grace: ‘Destiny in the rigid sense applies only to the outer being so long as it lives in the Ignorance. ... But as soon as one enters the path of spiritual life, this old predetermined destiny begins to recede. There comes in a new factor, the Divine Grace, the help of a higher Divine Force other than the force of *karma*, which can lift the sadhaka beyond the present possibilities of his nature. One’s spiritual destiny is then the divine election which ensures the future.’<sup>17</sup>

The same view on karma and grace is expressed by Sri Ramakrishna through the example of a cow tied to a post by a rope. The cow’s freedom of movement is limited to the circle of space determined by the length of the rope. Similarly, an ordinary person is bound by one’s karma, which limits one’s freedom like the rope in the case of the cow.<sup>18</sup> Sri Ramakrishna also added to this example that when a person turns to God and spiritual practice, the length of the rope of karma increases; in other words, one’s freedom increases in proportion to one’s spiritual progress and the action of divine grace.

## Conclusion

Vedanta philosophy recognizes that both determinism and free will are applicable to human beings, and that how bound or how free we are depends on our spiritual awareness. If we are not conscious of our spiritual Self and do not know how to stand apart from the movements of our nature, we will be driven to action by

desires and emotions, we will be overpowered by joy and grief, the consequences of success and failure in action. On the other hand, if we are aware of the movements of nature—desires and emotions—within ourselves and can stand apart from them, we will be able to have control over nature and exercise free will. The ideal way to attain freedom is to offer every action to God and leave the results in God’s hand. In the Gita’s words: ‘Having abandoned attachment, he who acts by dedicating his actions on Brahman is not stained by sin, even as water does not cling to a lotus leaf.’<sup>19</sup>



## References

1. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 3.2.13.
2. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1973), 814.
3. S Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 54.
4. Swami Abhedananda, *Doctrine of Karma: A Study in Its Philosophy and Practice* (Kolkata: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 2008), 14–15.
5. *Bhagavadgita*, 3.27.
6. *Mundaka Upanishad*, 3.1–2 and *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, 4.6–7.
7. See *Bhagavadgita*, 13.22.
8. Sri Aurobindo, *The Essays on the Gita* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1972), 222.
9. *Isha Upanishad*, 2.
10. *The Essays on the Gita*, 220.
11. *Bhagavadgita*, 15, 16–17.
12. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 1.95–6.
13. Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga, Part One* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1971), 467.
14. *The Essays on the Gita*, 203.
15. *Letters on Yoga, Part One*, 474–5.
16. *The Life Divine*, 460.
17. *Letters on Yoga, Part One*, 475.
18. See Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2010), 108.
19. *Bhagavadgita*, 5.10.



## *Environmentalism in India*

Rita Roy Chowdhury

**T**ECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT, rapid industrialization, chaotic urbanization, and rampant consumerism are held responsible for the wide spectrum of today's environmental crisis. Many people including scientists, philosophers, activists, and religious and political leaders have voiced concern while suggesting methods and policies in order to remedy the situation. Keeping in mind the gravity of the situation this study attempts to explore the relationship of some tribal communities in India with their surroundings. The intention is to look beyond science and technology and suggest a different approach to deal with the present environmental problems. However, to claim that this will be a complete answer may be unrealistic; rather, this is an effort to identify certain patterns of living that may open up a new vista for a healthy environmental relationship.

### ***Dynamic Environment and Ritam***

The environment is dynamic and constantly changing. The rate and extent of its changes vary; they are sometimes drastic and sometimes moderate. Some changes result from the movement within the physical world, and these are assimilated by the earth's natural processes. Changes that come from without disturb the smooth functioning of the natural world, because the inherent capacity of the earth cannot deal with them. 'Chemicals sprayed on croplands or forests or gardens lie long in the soil, entering into living organisms, passing from one to another in a chain of poisoning and death.'<sup>1</sup> Pollution is the result of such maladjustments within the environment. To understand the cause of the crisis it is necessary to appreciate that the environment operates through a chain of relationships. As expressed by Buddha: 'From the coming to be of that, this



arises. That being absent, this does not happen. From the cessation of that, this ceases.<sup>2</sup>

Vedic philosophers speak of *ritam*, the universal law of harmony, the inherent cohesive force that binds all individual parts within nature in such a way that nothing remains detached, segregated, and unconcerned but exhibits order, regularity, and perfection corresponding to a harmonious whole. In the Rig Veda *ritam* has been compared to a wheel with twelve spokes that eternally rotates around the heavens. It does not wear out. In it rests the world of being: 'Formed with twelve spokes, by length of time, unweakened, rolls round the heaven this wheel of during Order.'<sup>3</sup> *Ritam* is nature's comprehensive code qualified to cover human conduct, including avoidance of all material excesses, promotion of tolerance, selfless action, and direction towards the path of virtue. Nature ordinarily denotes the physical world with all its states and processes operating through its own mechanical laws, which may have evolved through the combination of its inherent properties or set in motion by some divine or supreme Being. Indians conceive Prakriti, nature, as the 'root-cause of the world of objects', the receptacle and nurse of all life, revealed in infinite arrangements and consisting of the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Reverence for nature was spontaneous among the Indians, whose religion and culture encompass nature's preservation and protection. The natural world operates as an intricate network, and humankind is one of its important links. Humans influence nature and, in turn, they are influenced by it. From the environmental standpoint, this can be interpreted as relatedness, through which every existence is inextricably linked with everything around. The relation between the different parts of nature is similar to that of a net:

Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net which has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out indefinitely in all directions. In accordance with the extravagant tastes of deities, the artificer has hung a single glittering jewel in each 'eye' of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in dimension, the jewels are infinite in number. ... If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection and look closely at it, we will discover that in its polished surface there are reflected *all* the other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels, so that there is an infinite process occurring.<sup>4</sup>

The philosophical position illustrates that however disconnected and discrete the natural events appear to be, their interdependence and interrelationship is ingrained, and any attempt to segregate or withdraw a single sequence breaks the environmental pattern. This rupture in the natural chain is a cause of suffering, according to the Buddha, because it violates the essence of *pratitya-samutpada*, codependent origination, which Nobel Peace Prize nominee Thich Nhat Hanh interprets as 'interbeing' or mutual interdependence in human relationships, both in the sense of relating one to another and in the wider sense of humanity's relationship to the natural world as a whole. One of the basic ideas behind the doctrine of mutual interdependence is that ultimately there is no demarcation between what appears to be an individual creature and its environment.

### **The Human-Nature Relationship**

The current environmental problems can be properly ascertained and understood by examining humankind's relationship with nature. A very brief survey of the human-nature relationship can offer important insight into the modern environmental crisis.

The natural world full of movements, sights, and sounds invoked in early human beings a mixed reaction in which fear of the unknown was prominent. They believed that natural phenomena possessed life similar to theirs, which directly and indirectly influenced their existence. During this stage humans were completely dependent upon nature and worked to familiarize themselves with nature's different moods of self-preservation. For those early humans, rocks, trees, mountains, streams, animals, heavenly bodies, wind, and so on possessed life or soul. Today this is called animism, but for them, the world was a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects. These subjects were agitated by desires, moved by emotions, and had abilities parallel to what humans perceived in themselves. Nature could be hurt, disappointed, and enraged if there was undue interference. This way of thinking induced a sense of reverence towards and worship of the environment, which naturally translated into the protection of the environment. The main feature of such a relationship was the absence of any sharp boundary between humans and the natural world. Humans and nature formed a single unit so interrelated and interdependent that the slightest alteration in any part of the unit would result in corresponding changes in other parts. Everything was endowed with a divine spark and this made their world view inclusive. 'It follows from the constitutive unity of creation that all living creatures stand in a special relation to one another. ... Our lives, their lives, the places we fill, are parts of the whole; "they are our earth borne companions and our fellow-mortals"'.<sup>5</sup> With time this human-nature relationship underwent changes, and the process continues varying, altering the environment.

The modern period has seen a rapid change in the human-nature relationship. It is neither

of dependence nor of interaction, but rather that of exploitation and control. This kind of relationship witnesses how humans subdue the non-human world, including the elements, through scientific knowledge and technological excellence. The scientific revolution that started in Europe around the sixteenth century had considerable environmental impact in the West. Several factors were responsible for this impact, some of them being the growth of population, overseas trade, the rise of industry, and the use of machines in agriculture. Scientists interfered with the natural growth of plants and animals to improve their own knowledge as well as to benefit humans. 'They did experiments on animals, domesticated plants and tried to control the forces of nature. Carefully cultivated orchards were made to bear greater number of fruits, flowers made to bloom earlier. Increasingly, they spoke out in favour of "mastering" and "managing" the earth.'<sup>6</sup> Everywhere industrial development is rapidly polluting the whole environment. Every life form, whether on land, air, or water, is slowly being contaminated.

### ***Technocentrism***

During its great scientific advancement, Western culture expounded the view that a person is separate from the environment and thereby introduced a binary view of the natural world. It did not consider that 'when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe'.<sup>7</sup> This ruptured the harmony of a mutual relation. A human as the 'subject' became distinct from the 'objective' world, which needs to be described, examined, exploited, and developed for the supposed benefit of humans. Such an approach utilized the newly developed inventions and products of the industrial revolution to systematically carry out environmental and social

changes. By the turn of the nineteenth century nature, besides being the source of raw materials, food, and much wealth, was also the 'sink' for unwanted products. The socio-economic framework, which relied heavily on technology, convinced itself that it could, if the need arose, alter, control, and protect the environment in keeping with social demands. This can be called technocentrism.

Focusing on insatiable human demands technocentrism changes the environment for human advantage by clearing forests, filling wetlands, and damming or changing the course of rivers. Technocentrism, as the word denotes, has faith in technology and believes that environmental crisis can be solved through proper application of scientific and technical knowledge. This dependence on technology, its uninhibited and extensive application, and the effluents discharged in the process has excessively increased pollution. But to hold technology responsible for the present crisis is to evade the real problem. Technology has contributed towards making life less toilsome, added health, wealth, and pleasantness to life. Friedrich Rapp states:

Technological progress achieved a lot. This becomes clearly evident if we compare the material conditions of the average person living in the industrialized nations or the average life-span with the situation that obtained two hundred years ago. As a matter of fact, two hundred years ago nobody would have dreamt of the capacities yielded by modern technology which we today take for granted. But people want ever more. The striking feature is the explosion of needs. Once the desire is stirred and fulfilment is seen as at hand, the level of aspiration is ever increasing.<sup>8</sup>

This is the paradox of a technocentric civilization: it is constantly evolving into finer and finer stages and simultaneously decreasing the level of satisfaction. In fact, armed with scientific and technological knowledge the human race seems intent on bringing the planet under its control, thereby jeopardizing the universal *ritam*. It is important to remember that good or bad, blessings or curses are neither in science nor in technology. These are instruments fashioned by us and are morally neutral. Technology is to be judged by how it is put into use. The destructive attitude



referred to above did not happen overnight. Peter Singer remarked: 'Western attitude to nature grew out of a blend of those Hebrew people, as represented in the early books of the Bible, and the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, particularly that of Aristotle. In contrast to some other ancient traditions, for example, those of India, both the Hebrew and the Greek traditions made human beings the centre of the moral universe—indeed not merely the centre, but very often, the entirety of the morally significant features of this world.'<sup>9</sup>

The current situation may be traced to the changes ushered by the scientific and industrial revolutions, which not only influenced socio-economics, trade, and industry but have a significant impact on the mode of human existence as well. Erich Fromm speaks of it in terms of 'having mode' and 'being mode'.

The difference between being and having is not essentially that between the East and West. The difference is rather between a society centred around a person and one centred around things. ... In the having mode my relationship is one of possessing and owning, one in which I want to make everybody and everything, including myself, into my property. ... The being mode of existence is aliveness and relatedness with the world. In essence it is interconnectedness between the different elements of nature projecting a harmonious whole.<sup>10</sup>

In the 'having mode' individuals aspire to possess everything to achieve their desired goal; the 'being mode', on the contrary, represents detachment and respect for nature.

The epistemological shift following the scientific revolution dismissed early humankind's reverence for nature as a myth. Instead of abiding by natural laws, humankind enforced their laws in the natural world for greater material gains and is, therefore, greatly responsible for the present environmental crisis. Humankind is now

a consumer and the natural world its resource to be exploited without hesitation.

### **Tribal Communities and Their Culture**

A very different relationship is found between humans and the natural world in the tribal communities of India. This relationship is based on the principles of dharma, which have existed in India from antiquity. According to Dr S Radhakrishnan, 'the principles, which we have to observe in our daily life and social relations, are constituted by what is called dharma.'<sup>11</sup> Etymologically derived from the root *dhri*, 'dharma' is that which upholds, supports, sustains. It is the cohesive force that binds the diverse states and processes of the natural world into a harmonious whole. As nourisher and sustainer of the natural world it is holy *annam*, food. From the environmental perspective, dharma may be interpreted as the power within nature that assists each object to reach its fulfilment.

Industrialization enabled advanced countries to amass immense wealth at the cost of environmental degradation. The consequences are poverty, disease, and pollution all over the world. This situation can be remedied only by striking a balance between human aspirations and protecting the environment by following dharma. This method will harmonize and unite the subject and the object. We will then find that all the elements of nature—living and non-living—are intimately bound and give shape and content to the natural world.

The caring for the environment is best demonstrated in Indian tribal communities. They are undoubtedly witnessing a massive industrialization that is impacting their original culture, but despite such influences they have somehow been able to retain their basic dharma. Unlike the technocentric life these communities live an 'ecocentric' life.



The Munda is one of the major tribal communities in the state of Jharkhand. They are supposed to be one of the earliest settlers in the area, therefore, their culture manifests some of the oldest tribal traditions of India. One such tradition is that of providing protection to large patches of forests, dedicated to deities or ancestral spirits, where they perform rituals. These sylvan patches have been designated as *sarnas*, sacred groves, and mark their religious identity. In such *sarnas* there is a colourful annual festival called Sarhul, which is observed by the Mundas as well as the Oraons, and is centred on the worship of the Sal tree. The Sal tree is believed to be the abode of goddess *sarna*, who protects the village and the community from all kinds of natural calamities and disasters.<sup>12</sup> Like the Mundas and the Oraons, thousands of tribal communities in India follow practices that treat nature respectfully, because they consider her to be the womb of all that is. Within her lies the creative power that over time has produced the astonishing biodiversity of the world. These tribal communities do not see the 'environment' as separate from the other spheres of activity in their lives.

When the Bishnois protect animals and trees, the Swadhyayis build tree-temples and water harvesting sites, and the Bhils practise their rituals in sacred groves, they are simply expressing their reverence for nature according to their culture and dharma, with no particular thought of 'protecting the environment'. All the numerous tribes of India do not see religion, ecology, and ethics as separate areas of life. For them, nature is part of a cosmic body and the need for a separate environmental ethics is superfluous.

Such a pattern of life has also been present since antiquity among the Meeteis of Manipur and Assam. The Meeteis worship nature gods and various components of nature, with Atiya Shidaba as the supreme God. They maintain a world view

in which humans are connected with nature not superficially but with personal involvement and intensity. Such societies do not unsettle nature's inherent order and establish dominance; on the contrary, they organize their social and economic life in accordance with it. Sacred groves and forest deities—*umang lais*, forest gods, in the Meetei language—are an integral part of the Manipuri tradition of nature worship. They respect, love, and care for nature and never feel any need to impose special norms. 'For such societies, a single law is operational for Nature as a whole. Their religion and culture does not permit damage of their environment. Pollution for them is sacrilegious.'<sup>13</sup>

Indian religion and philosophy interprets creation as a seamless whole, where everything is connected in inexplicable and intricate ways. Life is a continuous cycle, and we are all one with nature. This oneness of nature and humans is the object of worship and festivals among the Santhals, one of the most important tribes of India that is found in regions of West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, and Jharkhand. Environmental conservation is their tradition and the natural world their treasure, which they hand over to each succeeding generation.

The only way to remedy the present problem of environmental degradation is to reorient people by the guiding principles of dharma, not through any specific religion, but as a world view that includes the expression of indigenous tribal beliefs, customs, traditions, and prohibitions in dealing with nature and that, at the same time, encourages the positive application of scientific knowledge. As Bertrand Russell remarked: 'It is the worship of machinery not the use of it that does harm.'<sup>14</sup> This approach will coordinate scientific development with environmental protection and change the erroneous attitude that humans are outside and above nature.



(References on page 548)

# Lokasamgraha: The Social Ideal of the Bhagavadgita

Sandhya P Nair

THE BHAGAVADGITA, which contains the philosophical discourse of Sri Krishna to Arjuna, is an eternal source of inspiration for all people. It is the essence of the Vedas and the Vedanta and teaches the twin ideals of *nishkamakarma*, desireless or selfless work, and *lokasamgraha*, world's welfare, in its philosophy of karma.

## Definitions of Lokasamgraha

Although the Gita has traditionally been regarded as a teaching of religious, philosophical, and spiritual significance, it can also be interpreted as a set of ethical guidelines. *Lokasamgraha* is one of the most beautiful as well as practical ethical concepts discussed in the third chapter of the Gita. According to many, the term covers a multitude of social attributes more central to the Gita than the traditional otherworldly interpretation.

A question is often raised whether the Hindu scriptures emphasize only the ultimate goal or give noticeable importance to intermediate goals. The answer is that the majority of individuals are oriented towards *pravritti-marga*, the path of the world, and have plenty of secular intermediate goals. These intermediate goals gradually lead them to the ultimate goal. On the other hand, the few who have orientation towards *nivritti-marga*, the path of renunciation of the world, have the ultimate goal placed before them from the very beginning. Both *pravritti*, characterized as *abhyudaya*, secular prosperity,

and *nivritti*, characterized as *nishshreyasa*, pure spirituality, are integral to Vedic dharma and are the cause of social and global stability. This has been clearly delineated by Acharya Shankara in the introduction to his commentary on the Gita. The *Katha Upanishad* also speaks of *shreyas*, the preferable, the supreme Goal, and *preyas*, the desirable. The Upanishad further says that the former is the choice of the wise; the latter is the choice of the unwise.<sup>1</sup> In the Gita we find a balanced view, which presents King Janaka as an example to explain *lokasamgraha*.

*Lokasamgraha* is a compound word of *loka* and *samgraha*; the first word denotes the world and the second means holding together, keeping together, or protecting. Swami Vivekananda speaks of *lokasamgraha* as 'work for the good of others'.<sup>2</sup> Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the great patriot and scholar, compares the word *lokasamgraha* to the concept of 'welfare of the society'. Commenting on the purpose of an avatara, Tilak clarifies that *lokasamgraha* is only another name for the work that the blessed Lord does.<sup>3</sup>

Sri Krishna says that the purpose of an avatara is to protect dharma:

*Yada yada hi dharmasya,  
glanir-bhavati bharata;  
Abhyutthanam-adharmasya,  
tadatmanam srijamyaham.*

O scion of the Bharata dynasty, whenever there is decline of virtue and increase of vice, then do I manifest Myself.<sup>4</sup>

Sri Krishna explains that the cause of bondage is not karma, but attachment to the fruits of karma. Therefore, he teaches the relevance of *nishkamakarma*, through which one can achieve *lokasamgraha*.

Although the term *lokasamgraha* explicitly occurs only twice in the Gita (3.20 and 3.25), there are several other terms or phrases that implicitly refer to *lokasamgraha* throughout the Gita. Three of them deserve particular mention in the context of the present discussion: (i) *Samah sarveshu bhuteshu*, the same towards all beings (18.54); (ii) *atmaupamya*, the standard as would be applicable to oneself (6.32); (iii) *nirmamo nirahamkara*, without any sense of 'mine' or egoism and devoid of pride (2.71).

The idea of *samah sarveshu bhuteshu* makes us look upon all beings through the eye of sameness. There is variety and difference in the world, but the wise see God in all beings and develop the quality of *samatva*, which is a divine attribute. For a *sthitaprajna*, one established in wisdom, *samatva* means liberation from the pairs of opposites, while for good persons *samatva* means equality towards friend and foe. This *samatva* is called yoga (2.48).

The term *atmaupamya* implies that whatever is pleasant to all creatures is also pleasant to oneself, and whatever is painful to all is painful to oneself. Vedantic morality tells us that we are one because of the one Atman that dwells in all beings in its completeness. Jesus Christ too teaches us to love our neighbour as our self. And the Upanishads declare: '*Yatra vishvam bhavatyekanidam*; where the whole world becomes one place of rest or support.'<sup>5</sup> Hinduism always had the concept of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, the whole world is just like one family.

*Nirmamo nirahamkara* literally means without mine-ness and egoism. It occurs in a verse that describes the qualities of a *sthitaprajna* in


the second chapter, as well as that of a *bhakta*, devotee, in the twelfth chapter. A *sthitaprajna* or a *bhakta* has no selfish desires and has dedicated all his or her actions to God. This does not mean that the *sthitaprajna* or the *bhakta* does not put the best effort in whatever he or she does. In fact, as long as they are alive, they live only in order to benefit humanity. Swamiji explains the meaning of *lokasamgraha* thus:

The desire to do good is the highest motive power we have, if we know all the time that it is a privilege to help others. Do not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in your hand and say, 'Here, my poor man,' but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world, and thus become pure and perfect. All good acts tend to make us pure and perfect.<sup>6</sup>

In Tilak's opinion, the concept of *lokasamgraha* is based on the concept of *nishkamakarma*. He emphasizes that our duties for the welfare of the world should not be result-motivated, but should be performed simply as our dharma. Our actions become meaningful and a source of happiness when they are dedicated to God; and though in this case they still involve desire, they are noble because they have not a selfish motive, they have the common good as the goal.<sup>7</sup>

In accordance with Sri Aurobindo's opinion, *sattvika tapas*, purified austerity, includes the elements of *lokasamgraha* and *shreyas*. He viewed *sattvika tapas* as a duty accepted for higher reasons and with no desire for the fruit of the action. Thus, in his opinion, *tapasya* could contribute to the progress of humanity. He believed that genuine *lokasamgraha* is possible only after one has become a liberated soul.<sup>8</sup>

### A New Perspective

*Lokasamgraha* provides us with a perspective on the meaning and purpose of karma and dharma. This idea stresses the upliftment of all people. Society can function properly only on the principle of the ethical interdependence of its various constituents. As an essential part of society, the individual must have an active awareness of his or her social obligations. That is duty for duty's sake. 'Sarva-bhuta-hite ratah; engaged in the welfare of all beings' (12.4) is another ideal of the Gita involving the concept of *lokasamgraha*, as it carries the idea of selfless service. Thus, *lokasamgraha* as a cohesive aspect promotes activities that create feelings of cooperation and togetherness among the various members of society, including inter-religious tolerance. Awareness of *lokasamgraha* can encourage the development of virtues like ahimsa, compassion, forgiveness, freedom from pride, charity, aversion to fault finding, and even the zeal to preserve a clean environment. In short, *lokasamgraha* stands for the welfare of the entire world. It is a unique concept that is shared by different philosophical systems. 

### References

1. *Katha Upanishad*, 1.2.1–2.
2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 1.467.
3. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Gita Rahasya*, trans. B S Sukthankar, 2 vols (Poona: Tilak Brothers, 1935), 1.116.
4. *Bhagavadgita*, 4.7.
5. *Mahanarayana Upanishad*, 1.14.
6. *Complete Works*, 1.76.
7. See *Gita Rahasya*, 1.114.
8. Satya P Aggarwal, *Social Message of the Gita* (E-book, 1995), 160; available at <<http://books.google.co.in/>> accessed 18 September 2012.

(Continued from page 545)

### References

1. Carson Rachel, *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 6.
2. T W Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 2 vols (London: Luzac, 1950), 2.44.
3. Rig Veda, 1.165.11, in *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, trans. Ralph T H Griffith (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), 110.
4. Francis H Cook, 'The Jewel Net of Indra', in J B Callicot and R T Ames, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York, 1989), 214.
5. Richard L Ferm, *Nature, God and Humanity: Envisioning an Ethics of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), 207.
6. *Encyclopaedia of World Environmental History*, eds K Shepard, J R McNeill, and C Merchant, 3 vols (London: Routledge, 2004), 3.1104.
7. John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 211.
8. Friedrich Rapp, 'Explosion of Needs, Quality of Life, and the Ecology Problem', *Society for Philosophy and Technology*, 1/1–2 (1995); available at <<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/SPT/v1n1n2/rapp2.html>> accessed 20 September 2012.
9. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), 265.
10. Erich Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 16, 21.
11. Dr S Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956), 104.
12. See <<http://jharkhandi.com/Adivasi.aspx>> accessed 19 September 2012.
13. Jeetendro L Singh, Biraj N Singh, and Abhik Gupta, *Environmental Ethics in the Culture of Meeteis from North East India*; see <<http://www.eubios.info/ABC4/abc4320.htm>> accessed 19 September 2012.
14. Bertrand Russell with Dora Russell, *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1996), 231.

**T**he first end of life is knowledge; the second end of life is happiness. Knowledge and happiness lead to freedom. But not one can attain liberty until every being (ant or dog) has liberty. Not one can be happy until all are happy.

—The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, 6.83





# *Conflict and Its Solution in Indian Philosophy*

Phromphisit Phanchan

**T**HE SIX ORTHODOX SCHOOLS, also called Astika schools, of Indian philosophy—Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimamsa, and Vedanta—accept the Vedas as revealed scriptures, whereas the heterodox schools—Charvaka, Buddhism, and Jainism—deny the supremacy of the Vedas. However, all these various schools consider that conflict is inherent in life. When one struggles to eliminate or minimize conflict, a clear understanding of its nature helps in transcending it. There are various types of conflict due to various disagreements, but this article shows the root of all conflict and how the various philosophical schools try to resolve it.

### Conflict Defined

In the six orthodox schools conflict means *dubbkha*, suffering, pain. Patanjali, the founder of the yoga system, suggests the omnipresence of suffering.<sup>1</sup> In one way or the other people are tormented by conflict or pain. The Nyaya School defines suffering or conflict as an obstruction or a hindrance,<sup>2</sup> which creates a sense of constraint. Conflict prevents the soul from realizing its true nature. It is a feeling of disharmony, unfavourableness, and undesirableness by which one is harmed. It is a feeling of anger and is expressed in the form of harm. Shabara Swami opines that human beings are controlled by both the moral and natural laws of the universe. When their actions are in consonance with both these laws, they enjoy harmony. Disharmony or conflict arises when one acts against the established moral and natural laws, which produces adharma.<sup>3</sup> For instance, if a person commits an immoral deed, such as killing another person for wealth or any other reason, he or she is bound to face the consequences of this deed. This feeling of disharmony is termed *dubbkha*.

Advaitins define *dubbkha* as the experience arising from an unfavourable object.<sup>4</sup> Acharya Shankara clearly states that when the contact of the senses with their respective objects is favourable, the jiva, individual soul, experiences *sukha*, happiness; when the opposite occurs, *dubbkha* is experienced.<sup>5</sup> He observes that in the waking and dream states and till one's ultimate freedom, moksha, all experiences of *sukha* and *dubbkha* are the creations of the jiva. Thus, these experiences are characteristics of the mind and not of the real Self, just as a woman has different relationships with different people: for one she is a wife, for another a friend, for others a mother, or a daughter, or a daughter-in-law, and so on—though the kind of relationship changes, the person remains the same.

### Kinds of Conflict

Generally speaking, the orthodox schools classify conflict into the external and internal.

**External Conflict** • It pertains to the sense organs and the body. Physical pains are those caused by ailments such as cold, fever, headache, and so on. These pains are caused by external factors.<sup>6</sup> For example, when a person is beaten up or collides with an inanimate object, he or she suffers from physical injury and the resultant bodily *dubbkha*. These external pains can also be caused by supernatural agencies such as evil spirits, planets, demons, and other superhuman agencies (3). Floods, earthquakes, cyclones, and other natural catastrophes, which result in manifold sufferings, are said to be caused by the influence of these supernatural forces. External *dubbkha* includes all those sufferings the causes of which cannot be precisely identified within the realm of nature. The *Yoga Sutra* states that external conflict is a suffering due to *parinama*, transformation.<sup>7</sup> It refers to the pain generated due to people's ignorance about the inherent change and decay to which all objects are subjected. Persons who think that these objects are permanent and the experiences produced by their contact are also permanent are bound to suffer, for an object that has changed may give a different kind of experience at a different time.

**Internal Conflict** • It pertains to mental pains. Mental pains arise from purely psychological factors. The *Sankhya Tattva Kaumudi* mentions desire, wrath, avarice, affection, fear, envy, grief, and non-perception of particular objects as the sources of mental conflict or suffering.<sup>8</sup> Mental conflict arises from the feeling of misery and pain generated through *raga*, attachment, and *dvesha*, aversion, to certain objects. On the other hand, emotional suffering is interlinked with both cognitive and conative sufferings, which involve a process of knowing



and willing. All these sufferings arise from the activities of the mind and are mutually dependent. Acharya Shankara contends that there are different types of emotional suffering depending on the degree and intensity of the suffering each feeling generates. For instance, the *dukkha* caused by tamasic impulses of the mind, such as sex, produce more suffering than the *dukkha* caused by rajasic impulses. He further observes that through attachment the jiva also develops fear and anxiety of being deprived of the object to which it has become attached. The result of all such feelings is that the jiva produces a chain of bondages, and along with it suffers a load of pain.

Mental *dukkha* leads to physical *dukkha*. Acharya Shankara observes that it is the jiva's desire for the pleasant sensual contact and the aversion for the unpleasant that fuels the chain of feeling.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, mental pain is more tormenting than bodily pain, for it leaves in the mind a permanent scar, which one may have to carry till one's death and even beyond. Bodily wounds, though painful, are temporary; they may subside after proper medical attention. But the agony and torment produced by mental pain last longer.

### Roots of Conflict

According to the six orthodox schools, the root of conflict causing *dukkha* is triple: *ichchha*, desire; *dvesha*, aversion; and *avidya*, ignorance. They cause activity and the resultant experience of suffering.

**Desire** • It is the yearning for something unattained. It is of two kinds: *svārtha*, egotistic, and *parārtha*, altruistic. Egotistic yearning is the desire to attain something for oneself. Altruistic yearning is the desire to attain something for others. Kanada observes that people aspire for objects from which they have derived pleasure in the past. They create attachment towards

such objects.<sup>10</sup> Shankara Mishra, commenting on the *Vaisheshika Sutra*, writes of every being as having desires corresponding to its distinct birth (6.2.13). For example, human beings may have the desire for eating rice, wheat, or other grains edible for humans, whereas animals like the deer may have the desire to eat grass and other vegetation edible for them.

**Aversion** • It is a state of the mind caused by the perception that the contact with a particular object may generate pain. It is the repulsion towards objects regarded as unfavourable, such as disease, thorns, and so on. One develops a feeling of dislike for certain objects when one feels that the contact with these would affect one's mental harmony. With the disturbance of the mental balance, the mind is bound to generate a feeling of uneasiness, resulting in pain and misery. It produces a burning sensation in the subject. *Dvesha* originates from the following factors: *krodha*, anger; *amarsha*, envy; *manyu*, malice; *droha*, longing to cause injury; and *akshama*, intolerance. These activate the body through the mind into performing karmas and produce experiences of *dukkha* (6.2.14–15).

**Ignorance** • It is defined as *dushta-jñanam*, imperfect knowledge (9.2.11). It is cognition unduly applied; the cognition of a thing as something different from what it really is. In this situation a thing is attributed with certain characteristics that it does not possess. In it the apparent is mistaken for the real; the non-self is taken for the Self.<sup>11</sup> Gautama, founder of the Nyaya school, opines that *avidya* is the most sorrowful of all types of evils. In the Vaisheshika philosophy it is also the basis for *raga* and *dvesha*,<sup>12</sup> which cease when *avidya* is annihilated, as the jiva acquires right knowledge. Patanjali concludes that *avidya* is the root-cause of all suffering.<sup>13</sup> Vachaspati Mishra comments that *avidya* refers to the lack of knowledge about the Self.


*Atma-jnana*, Self-knowledge, alone, can free the mind from the fetters of ignorance.

Therefore, conflict or suffering arises from the jiva's attachment to and desire for objects of the phenomenal world and aversion to unpleasant objects, which are caused by ignorance. Ignorance brings about the false identification of the real Self with the objective, unreal world and its objects of experience, and this causes pain (2.5, 2.4). The contact of the senses with the sense objects, which results from this process of attachment and aversion, produces merit and demerit, and in turn these decide and produce the experiences of *sukha* and *duhkha*. The Bhagavadgita teaches: 'But the contacts of the organs with the objects are the producers of cold and heat, happiness and sorrow. They have a beginning and an end, [and] are transient. Bear them, O descendant of Bharata.'<sup>14</sup>

### Resolution of Conflict

Resolution of conflict is liberation from suffering. Ishvara Krishna contends that the only remedial measure for overcoming *duhkha* is *vivekajnana*, discriminative wisdom, of Purusha as being entirely different from Prakriti. Philosophical enquiry and yoga help a person acquire this discriminative wisdom.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, Mimamsakas contend that one's mental and physical karmas are the causes of *duhkha*.<sup>16</sup> The mental cause can be overcome by acquiring *dharma-jnana*, knowledge of dharma. The governing factor of *adrishta*, unseen effect, can be cleared and exhausted by the performance of positive and neutral karmas and avoidance of negative karmas, as prescribed in the Vedas. Further, by exhausting the accumulated stock of dharma and adharma as well as experiencing all the results of these karmas, the Atman gets disjointed from the body and does not take birth again. Only then can one attain complete freedom from *duhkha*.

Acharya Shankara discusses the false sense of identity between the body, which is inert matter, and the Atman, which is of the nature of pure consciousness.<sup>17</sup> This erroneous identity, a product of a wrong cognition and conception, can be dispelled by acquiring right knowledge. *Brahmajnana*, knowledge of Brahman, alone can lift the screen of ignorance, which takes the jiva for a ride into the abyss of endless births and suffering. Therefore, it is only right knowledge that can help a jiva free itself from the clutches of the unending suffering of *samsara* and attain infinite bliss. 

### References

1. Patanjali, *Yoga Sutra*, 2.15.
2. Gautama, *Nyaya Sutra*, 1.1.21.
3. '*Duhkhaphalabhogyā adharmah shrūyate*', Shabara's commentary on *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, 3.8.3-9; see M V Ram Kumar Ratnam and D B Rao, *Dukkha: Suffering in Early Buddhism* (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2003), 22-3.
4. Swami Vidyananda, *Panchadasi*, 13.73.1.
5. Acharya Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, 105.
6. *Sāṃkhya Kārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa with the Tattva Kaumudī of Śrī Vācaspati Miśra*, trans. Swami Virupakshananda (Madras: Ramakrishna Math, 2008), 2.
7. *Yoga Sutra*, 2.15.
8. *Sāṃkhya Kārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa with the Tattva Kaumudī of Śrī Vācaspati Miśra*, 2.
9. M V Ram Kumar Ratnam, *The Concept of Dukkha in Indian Philosophy with Special Reference to Early Buddhism* (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2003), 28.
10. Kanada, *Vaisheshika Sutra*, 6.2.10-13.
11. Upasakara commentary on *Vaisheshika Sutra*, 9.2.11.
12. *Vaisheshika Sutra*, 9.1.3-9.
13. *Yoga Sutra*, 2.4.
14. Bhagavadgita, 2.14.
15. Ishvara Krishna, *Samkhya Karika*, 2.
16. *The Concept of Dukkha in Indian Philosophy with Special Reference to Early Buddhism*, 28.
17. *Vivekachudamani*, 137.



# Leadership Excellence: Vivekananda's Perspective

Dr Koustab Ghosh

THE GROWING LITERATURE in organizational management and human resources focuses on behavioural aspects of leadership development and underplays the importance of a leader's character and values. Therefore, this relatively underemphasized dimension of leadership development needs to be reviewed in a systematic manner. Vivekananda's thoughts and discourses have been used in this paper as the basis for developing and elaborating a holistic leadership model.

## Human Values and Character

The worldwide downturn of economies and financial institutions, increasing greed and corruption, and fall of multinational corporations is alarming. The need of a leader with good character and moral values is acutely felt in both the West and the East. Indian spiritual literature, universal in its scope, can be useful in this regard as it is based on principles of restraint, sensitivity, and delineation of a higher reality. The solution to the problems faced by humankind today lies in developing an attitude of adjustment and cooperation and in overcoming the hostile competition and coercion. Besides, as taught by Vivekananda, every individual is required to journey from the self, chronically deficit-driven, to the Self, eternally surplus-driven. This higher Self is the basis of developing a sound ethical character supported by strong moral values.

Within each individual there is a core characterized by the unchanging Self, which is of the

nature of *purnatva*, wholeness, and *ananda*, bliss. This core Self, however, lies covered by the individual self, which is identified with the selfish psychophysical personality. Through conscious practice like meditation, prayer, unselfish work, and the like this covering can be removed and the core can be united with the higher universal Self. This is the ultimate goal of humankind, and the journey to the universal Self is principally through good character and moral values. Unselfish work has a tremendous effect on developing the character and leads to the purification of the mind, *chitta shuddhi*. This internal purification is a must for actualizing the Reality. Unfortunately, undue emphasis by the educational system on the rational side has made the modern mind tilt more towards cognitive development than the social, emotional, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual aspects. It has made individuals intellectual but selfish and one-sided, devoid of character and values. It is aptly stated that if wealth is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost, something is lost; and if character is lost, everything is lost. Vivekananda says that there is no allegiance possible where there is no character in the leader, and mental purity ensures the most lasting allegiance and confidence.

As the need for a leader with character is pressing, the recent management literature is now seen to address this issue. Some Western scholars unambiguously maintain that behavioural changes have to be simultaneously accompanied by changes in people's character, if

successful transformation is to be achieved. Renowned management thinker Robert Kaplan writes: 'Behavioural change certainly has its place in management development. But for senior managers to significantly change the way they lead their organizations, behavioural change by itself is often not enough. Instead, some type of change in character or identity is required.'<sup>1</sup> And in the words of Warren Bennis: 'I would argue that more leaders have been made by accident, circumstance, sheer grit, or will than have been made by all the leadership courses put together. Leadership courses can only teach skills. They can't teach character or vision—and indeed they don't even try. Developing character and vision is the way leaders invent themselves.'<sup>2</sup>

Vivekananda was a born leader. Intensely unselfish and sacrificing he led by precept and example. He had the capacity to rouse in the most ordinary person the latent strength of the Atman. Whatever he did and spoke inspired thousands. At the same time, he was compassionate and understood how things, people, and nations evolve, and gradually applied his remedies in order to convert weakness into strength, unselfishness into selflessness, hesitation into self-confidence. He made Vedanta practical in every movement of life. As a youth Vivekananda configured his life, under the discipleship of Sri Ramakrishna, towards attaining the higher Self through tremendous character-building. After attaining perfection, he emphasized service above self as well as renunciation as the foundation of all ethics and morality. Vivekananda taught the Vedantic ideal of the essential divinity and unity of universal life.

### **Rajarshi Model of Leadership**

In the past few decades innumerable studies and research have been undertaken in Western countries on leadership behaviour, attributes,

and processes. Most of them are being taught in full-time business management education programmes as well as executive training programmes. As part of this paper, I would like to highlight the leadership model based on Vedantic principles that had been developed by a group of scholars engaged in exploring ancient Indian ethos through conscious and systematic attempts. In the sociocultural context of ancient India, the raja, king, was entrusted with running the state through fair and impartial administrative functionaries. On the other hand, the position of the rishi, sage, was held with high respect and esteem, as he was the king's guide. Both sage and king worked for the greater benefit of the kingdom's prosperity and morality. This combined impact of prosperity through administrative work and spirituality blended into the leadership styles of national leaders like Janaka, Ashoka, Chandragupta, Akbar, and Shivaji, among others. The most profound example of leadership lies in the Mahabharata, where a confused Arjuna was guided and mentored on the battlefield by Sri Krishna.

This Rajarshi model of leadership has also been referred to as 'wisdom leadership' by S K Chakraborty, the essence of which lies in the concept of 'rishi-consciousness'. It implies the union of the eternal and infinite Self with the individual and finite self, that is, a transformation from selfishness to total selflessness. This can be nurtured and developed consciously through controlling the body and senses, mental purification, concentration, and prayer. The character of a leader has to be built on two solid pillars: *satya*, truth, and *ritam*, order, which in turn ensures goodness for one and for all.<sup>3</sup>

True humility lies at the heart of service to humankind. Vivekananda taught that whenever anyone works, he or she should discharge the assigned duties and responsibilities with the attitude of a servant and not of a master. To quote

Vivekananda: 'Be the servant if you will rule. That is the real secret.'<sup>4</sup> 'Such a man becomes a world-mover for whom this little self is dead and God stands in its place' (2.286).

A leader has the great responsibility of leading a team, organization, community, society, or nation from the front to achieve certain goals. Performing service with humility gives a leader immense mental power and people's support to achieve the required objectives. In the year 2000 the renowned management thinker and author Jim Collins conceptualized and subsequently verified through organizational research the theory of the 'level 5 leadership'. He established through his study that the key ingredient that allows a company to become great is having a 'level 5 leader', that is, an executive in whom genuine personal humility blends with intense professional will. What the modern management research and studies have found, Vivekananda expounded about a hundred years ago through his profound wisdom.

### **Guidelines for Students**

The educational system must orient minds towards developing concentration. The mind has to be stimulated and nurtured to think through a problem deeply. But along with this process of concentration, the power of detachment also has to be taught. In the words of Vivekananda: 'We must learn not only to attach the mind to one thing exclusively, but also to detach it at a moment's notice and place it on something else. These two should be developed together to make it safe' (6.38).

The body and the mind of students have to be moulded towards learning, thinking independently, and creatively applying new ideas. The potential to accomplish any task becomes easier through the power of brahmacharya, continence, as was done in the Gurukulas in ancient

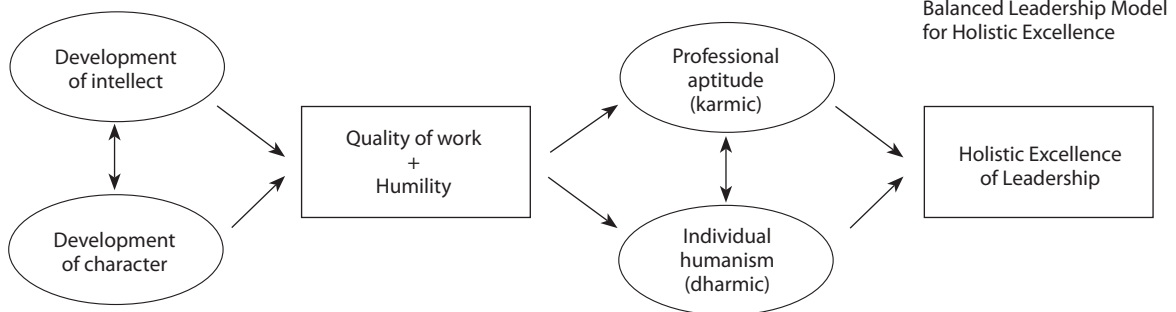
India. The vast amount of knowledge imparted to the students within a relatively short time can then be easily internalized and retained. Brahmacharya also helps the student develop devotion to knowledge and to the learning process.

Vivekananda professed: 'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet' (5.342). The education system should try and develop in each individual respect and an attitude of service for others. These two form the basic ingredients for building the character of learners, who in due course will become responsible citizens. In elaborating his ideas on character building, Vivekananda said: 'Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff. ... What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. ... Each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad' (1.54). Therefore, to overpower mental evils and to develop the higher Self a strong will power and constant effort is required.

The relevance and application of education has to be in accord with the highest ideals of society and humanity. What one receives from the educational system should be given back, in time, in an enhanced form. To give is the law of nature, and if this law is neglected or trampled, every social system slowly withers and dies. We must keep in mind that an educational system should develop, evolve, and maintain itself in order to cater to future students and social needs. The responsibility of keeping the system in such a dynamic state devolves on every student. Only such an education system makes better and responsible humans.

### A Model of Leadership Excellence

In many of his works, Vivekananda emphasized that the technology and professionalism of the West have to be combined with the values, philosophy, and Vedic orientation of the East in order to produce unparalleled work efficiency and nobility of character. I propose a model for leadership, in any sphere of life, by blending professionalism and humanism (see figure 1).




**Figure 1**  
Balanced Leadership Model  
for Holistic Excellence

The simultaneous development of intelligence, creativity, and character is imperative to achieve professionalism and integrity. Right education and knowledge prepares a student to become a skilled and efficient administrator, while character-building makes the student compassionate and sensitive to others. This dual flow of karma and dharma creates a sustainable leadership quality in an individual, organization, society, community, or nation.

The world today is rampant with all sorts of restlessness and destructive tendencies in people. It is difficult to hold on to the noble and cherished values of life. Fierce competition in all spheres of human life has made individuals cruel. Against this backdrop, leadership problems must be seen in a larger context and have to be responded accordingly. Such situations need exceptional leaders. Leadership should not be focused only on one's area of expertise, it should be

applied to all aspects of daily life. One may be a leader in a successful company but a failure in trying to prevent the weak and the poor from being exploited in one's neighbourhood. Such leadership is one-sided and much criticism of social ills comes due to such one-sided leaders. Only an all-round leader can inspire others. Vivekananda was such a leader. He would perform the smallest task with joy, an attitude that later immensely helped

his disciples become leaders with a difference. Therefore, it is time to revitalize our minds and models towards developing leaders with integrity, nobility, and unselfishness, and not merely to produce well-paid intellectuals with no social or human concerns. Only such people would be able to undertake the journey towards their core self and join it to the universal Self. 

### References

1. R E Kaplan, 'Introduction: Why Character and Leadership?', *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Sciences*, 26/4 (November, 1990), 417–18.
2. W G Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Philadelphia: Perseus Books, 2010), 36.
3. See S K Chakraborty, *Values and Ethics for Organizations: Theory and Practice* (Delhi: Oxford University, 1998), 52.
4. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 7.482.



# Swami Vivekananda's Vision of Humankind

Dr R Lekshmi

**T**HE CENTRAL THRUST of Swami Vivekananda's life and teachings was to raise humanity to its inherent divinity. And the manifestation of this potential divinity of the soul found constant resonance in his words, which sprang forth spontaneously from his own realizations. His teachings, therefore, raise the dignity, status, and worth of humankind to the pinnacle of excellence. This exaltation of humans in their universal divine dimension expresses itself in a concern for humankind everywhere and in every field of endeavour.

Swamiji's mission towards humankind was earmarked for him by his master Sri Ramakrishna. Many people could not understand the young Narendranath and criticized him, but not his master. In the words of Swami Saradananda:

From the very start of their acquaintance, he [Sri Ramakrishna] could understand that Narendra's 'arrogance and insolence' arose from his great self-confidence, which was the result of the extraordinary mental power hidden within him, that his absolute free behaviour indicated nothing but the self-control natural to him, and that his indifference to the respect shown by people arose from the self-satisfaction due to his pure character. He had the conviction that later on the extraordinary nature of Narendra would fully blossom like a lotus of a thousand petals and would be established in its own incomparable glory and greatness. Coming then into collision with the world, scorched by miseries, that arrogance and insolence of his would melt into infinite compassion, his extraordinary self-confidence would re-install hopes in the broken-hearted and his free behaviour,

remaining within the bounds of control in all respects, would point out to others that self-control alone was the path to real Freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Swamiji's approach to individuality, human nature, and human excellence is psychological as well as philosophical. It helps one understand the problems, limitations, and failures of human life and to find out fruitful solutions. He repeatedly asserted that people are not what they appear to be. In his discussion on 'The Real Nature of Man', Swamiji said: 'The Real Man, therefore, is one and infinite, the omnipresent Spirit. And the apparent man is only a limitation of that Real Man. In that sense the mythologies are true that the apparent man, however great he may be, is only a dim reflection of the Real Man who is beyond. The Real Man, the Spirit, being beyond cause and effect, not bound by time and space, must, therefore, be free. He was never bound, and could not be bound.'<sup>2</sup>

## ***Need for Harmonious Development***

A person may be intellectual or devotional or mystical or active. Swamiji did not want one-sided development but the combination of all the above four qualities in a person. The ideal person is one who has such an integrated personality. Swamiji stood for the harmonious development of the individual at physical, mental, moral, intellectual, and spiritual levels: 'We want the man whose heart feels intensely the miseries and sorrows of the world. ... And [we want] the man who not only can feel but can find the meaning of things, who delves deeply into the heart of nature

and understanding. [We want] the man who will not even stop there, [but] who wants to work out [the feeling and meaning by actual deeds]. Such a combination of head, heart, and hand is what we want' (6.49).

In this world only human beings can realize and attain oneness with God, and this is through a long process of striving towards perfection. Swamiji said: 'Immediate salvation is impossible for the cow or the dog, although they have mind, because their Chitta cannot as yet take that form which we call intellect' (1.203). Humanity was primitive a few million years ago; through a long process of evolution and struggle we have reached this present state; in the future we will palpably understand our inherent divinity. We are ascending from the biological to the social planes of existence, and from there to the moral and intellectual planes, to finally reach the spiritual plane. Vedanta, as preached by Swamiji, orients humanity in this direction. He said: 'We must take man where he stands, and help him upwards. Man stands in materialism; you and I are materialists. ... So we have to take ourselves where we are as materialists, and must take the help of matter and go on slowly until we become real spiritualists, and feel ourselves spirit, understand the spirit, and find that this world which we call the infinite is but a gross external form of that world which is behind' (4.17).

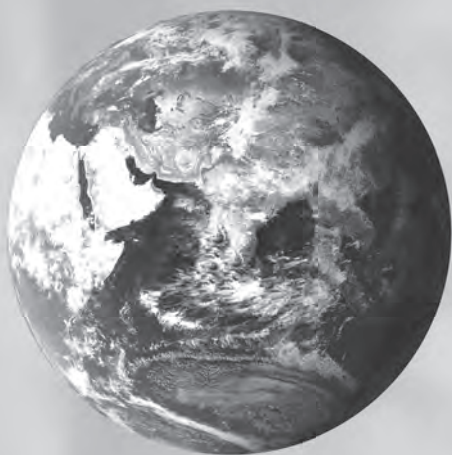
In this remarkable journey the human being is transformed into an ideal person, integrated and universal. Swamiji was the perfect example of integration and universality. 'Though one could see traces of the heart of Buddha, the brain of Sankara, the love of Sri Chaitanya, the spiritual fire of Guru Nanak, the apostolic eloquence of St. Paul and the mildness of Christ—all harmoniously combined in him, one could hardly miss an eloquent expression of the spirit

of renunciation and service in and through all the aspects of his life. Renunciation and service were the alpha and omega of his life. He in fact, was the veritable embodiment of renunciation and service.'<sup>3</sup>

Swamiji's philosophy is indeed a gospel of human excellence. He had assimilated in himself whatever is sublime in Indian culture, religion, and tradition as well as in Western culture and knowledge. 'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four Yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical.'<sup>4</sup> The deepening of his spiritual awareness and the broadening of his human sympathies came to him from Sri Ramakrishna. Swamiji found that the world had two great cultures in the past that led to two distinct types of human excellence: the ancient Hindu and the ancient Greek. These two have made very distinct contributions to human development. The Greeks laid stress on character excellence, which imparts the ability to handle efficiently the world around them, while the Indian concept of excellence concentrates on the spiritual dimension within. By realizing the complementary nature of the two in achieving total human fulfilment, Swamiji stressed manliness as an essential requisite for spirituality. It was his Advaitic vision of the oneness of existence that made him unite the Eastern and Western human excellence. He stressed the need to educate modern humanity to combine productive efficiency in one's outer life and spiritual efficiency in one's inner life.

### ***Limitations of the Human Nature***

Swamiji was indeed a great psychologist. He could analyse and understand human nature and its weaknesses. In his view, the majority of



the problems faced by humans are caused by weaknesses and lack of faith in oneself. In spite of having conceived the highest excellence, humankind fails to work it out individually and socially. This reminds us of Sri Krishna's exhortation to Arjuna to assert his manliness: '*Klaibyam ma sma gamah partha naitattvayyupapadyate*; yield not to unmanliness, O Partha, this does not befit you.'<sup>5</sup>

Swamiji told us that we have hypnotized ourselves and are oblivious of our hidden potentialities. In describing this hypnotism, he illustrated it with a story. A pregnant lioness in search of a prey leaped upon a flock of sheep. The effort killed her but not before giving birth to a cub. The cub was brought up by the flock of sheep; ate grass and bleated like a sheep. One day a lion came across this flock and was astonished to find a lion among them. The lion came to the lion-sheep and said that he was a lion. He took the lion-sheep to a lake and asked to look at his own image. Then the lion roared and asked the other to do the same. The lion-sheep tried his voice and was soon roaring grandly as the other.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, we have hypnotized ourselves thinking that we are finite and little. We suffer terribly from a deep sense of insecurity and find our life boring due to the lack of faith in our innate divinity. This alienation from our divine nature has caused us restlessness and confusion. Through



spiritual awakening we can experience peace and integration within ourselves and radiate the same outside. We can become capable of expressing love, compassion, and concern for others. Swamiji said: 'Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakens. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity' (3.193).

We fail to achieve higher possibilities in life due to our lack of conviction in ourselves. Swamiji repeatedly held that great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. He held that this highest Truth can be realized by everyone in this very life because it is in everybody, only we have to unfold it. He said that life is a long march towards the best and the highest that is hidden within us. He turned our attention towards the Upanishads in this regard. At birth a

human baby is very tender, weak, and fragile, but slowly its innate powers unfold. First, muscular strength comes to it, then nervous strength followed by mental strength; it gains the power to crawl, to sit up, to walk, and finally to run. At every stage it gains new experiences of happiness and fulfilment. We can notice the child steadily unfolding the enormous possibilities hidden within it, becoming a statesman, scientist, artist, sage, saint, and even a divine incarnation. All these possibilities were present in the baby and they became manifest. Like a big tree, which has its future possibilities hidden within a tiny seed, all the human possibilities, including the spiritual, lie hidden in us.<sup>7</sup>

Thought is the propelling force in us. Action comes from thinking. Swamiji exhorted us to fill our brains with high thoughts and high ideals, which results in great works. All our actions are magnified and transformed by the power of thought. We should entertain positive thoughts: 'We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care of what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live, they travel far. Each thought we think is tinged with our own character, so that for the pure and holy man, even his jests or abuse will have the twist of his own love and purity and do good.'<sup>8</sup>

We generally lay all the blame upon others or say that it is our fate. But Swamiji said that we are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish to be, we have the power to make ourselves. It is the subjective world that rules the objective. He taught: 'Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see things in the proper light' (1.441).

### **Realization of Human Excellence**

Swamiji's whole attention was focussed on the making of strong individuals, of building

character, and the awakening of personality. He wanted men and women to be energetic, courageous, and endowed with personality. He repeatedly stressed the importance of a man-making religion and a man-making education. As was told above, he kept manliness as the central idea of his religion and education. He said: 'The older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new gospel' (8.264). By manliness Swamiji meant physical strength and well being, depth of thought, strength of conviction, faith in oneself, humanistic impulses, and practical efficiency. It is the type of strength that enables one to develop faith in oneself and thereby overcome all difficulties and establish dominance over oneself.

Swamiji asserted that we must first believe in ourselves and then in God. We can remould ourselves to attain glory in our life if we regain our spiritual consciousness. That is why the role of faith is so important in our lives. He said: 'Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God—this is the secret of greatness. If you have faith in all three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you' (3.190). Faith in oneself does not mean selfish faith but faith in the infinite spirit that is in all.

If there was something that Swamiji was not able to tolerate that was weakness. For him strength is life and weakness is death, strength is goodness and weakness is sin. Although he emphasized spiritual strength, he also gave importance to physical, mental, moral, and intellectual strength. Self-confidence, in his view, is the greatest asset. It helps one tackle and endure the baffling problems of life. Along with strength and self-confidence one must cultivate fearlessness. According to Swamiji, fear is the cause of



degradation. It is fearlessness that brings heaven in a moment. Time and again he said that the world required a few hundred bold men and women who can believe in the Truth and practise it in their lives. He was convinced that to be successful in life we must have tremendous will power and perseverance. Since each one of us has infinite power, we can do anything and everything. We must have that sort of firm conviction, boundless energy, and indomitable will.

We are sure to reach the goal provided we work hard enough. For attaining anything great, great labour is a must. 'Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy, and, above all, perfect obedience—these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration' (6.349). Three conditions are necessary to attain any thing great, according to him. They are a heart full of feeling, the will to surmount difficulties, and steadfastness to truth. In his vision, the secret of true success or true happiness is this: the person who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish one is the most successful. The more we give, the more will come to us. Swamiji pointed out that unselfishness is the secret of work. And another secret for successful work is self-restraint, which is the manifestation of a greater power within. Self-restraint produces a mighty will. Swamiji further said that we should look upon others in the most charitable light. Concern for others is the essence of ethics, the spring of character, and the source of all other human excellence. He said that they alone live who live for others and encouraged us to love everyone as our own self, because the whole universe is one. The idea of the little personalized self is the cause of all misery. When this idea has been got rid of, all miseries and struggles cease. Then comes perfect happiness and the universal love that raises us above everything mundane.

## Conclusion

It may be said that Swamiji continuously wrestled with ways and means by which each and every one of us could rise to the knowledge of the Self. He found in Self-knowledge the way of bringing into expression all the special strength and excellence in a person's temperament and character. He stood for the integration of human personality, which in fact is very much needed today. He believed in an all-round growth, which he marvellously synthesized in his life and teachings from the Eastern and Western traditions. He advocated a harmonious development of every aspect of the individual: a strong body, mind with clarity and control, razor-sharp intellect, will of steel, heart full of love and sympathy, and a life dedicated to the realization of the Self. Swamiji's universal gospel is the raising of all human beings from where they are to the highest physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual states until every one of us realizes our own divinity and the unity of existence.



## References

1. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2010), 1070–1.
2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 2.78.
3. Swami Sambuddhananda, 'Vivekananda's Ideal of Renunciation and Service', *Vivekananda: The Great Spiritual Teacher* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2008), 410.
4. Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2012), 234.
5. Bhagavadgita, 2.3.
6. See *Complete Works*, 2.86.
7. See Swami Ranganathananda, *Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2009), 13.
8. *Complete Works*, 7.14.

# Eternal Words

**Swami Adbhutananda**

Compiled by Swami Siddhananda; translated by Swami Sarvadevananda

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

**I**F ANYTHING IS DIFFICULT to follow, it is the path of spirituality. True spirituality does not come without God's grace.

## ***Faith, Devotion, Sadhana, and Attainment of Perfection***

Can anyone attain spirituality with a mind that shrinks whenever a single harsh word is spoken? Nowadays people run after religion. All such running is a fad. How many people are genuine? How many want spirituality? Everyone acts religiously, as if religion were a passing trend. Still, even a bad attempt of doing good is good—at least that much is gained. But just as one doesn't learn a thing if one doesn't follow the instructions of one's school-teacher, one cannot attain spirituality if one doesn't listen to those with spiritual knowledge. Spirituality cannot be attained by fraud. Ramprasad sang: 'O mind, did you think by faking devotion you could attain Mother Shyama? / She isn't a sweet in a baby's hand that by distractions you can snatch it to eat. / Who will trick who—the bumpkin or the braggart? / She will take every last cent that she demands.'

Will you try to cheat God? He is wiser than you.

No one can obstruct the one who wants to do spiritual and devotional practices. He'll go on with his work. The mood of one who performs spiritual and devotional practices is completely different from that of ordinary people.

There are diverse paths to God-realization. One must hold on to one of them with all one's

might; one needs one-pointed devotion to attain God: 'Though I know that the Lord of Lakshmi [Vishnu] and the Lord of Janaki [Rama] are not different and are the supreme Self, yet the lotus-eyed Rama is my all-in-all.' One needs to have one-pointed devotion like Hanuman's.

Nothing is as mischievous as the mind. It raises so many doubts and disbeliefs! As one repeats the name of God, the desire for honour and fame departs and the mind becomes pure.

It is far better to call upon God than to learn, expound, and teach to others thousands of religious subjects.

Is spirituality like the delight of sense enjoyments that one will get instant results? The attainment of spirituality takes time—one must patiently stay on the right course.

When a man is hungry, every type of food will seem delicious. At such times, he eats a belly-full of whatever he is served. Satisfying hunger is surely the body's predominant need. Similarly, one who has developed intense devotion to God doesn't dispute philosophies and paths. Restless to realize God, he follows one of the available paths. Intense love and abiding faith are crucial means of God realization.

The sages used to sing the glories of Sri Krishna. That is why Sri Krishna revealed himself to them declaring: 'I am God.' The boys of Vraja played and sported with him so much, yet they could not know him. If one wants to know God, one must do spiritual and devotional practices and sing his glories. If one continues in this

way, God will surely appear and make everything easily known. No matter how much one wanders, he will see that there is nothing anywhere—only futile suffering. If one can sit in one place, calm the mind, and call upon God alone, one will achieve everything.

If one doubts the words of the guru, one can never attain spirituality. Is it an ordinary thing to depend on one person? One will have to go on following the guru's instruction, whether happiness or misery comes—then only will the benefit fructify.

Can a person lacking character understand the inner meaning of spirituality? God says: 'Oh man, be truthful, be pure, be a person of character; then you will be able to realize me.' If a person has a bad character, he cannot understand the Shastras, the Puranas, and the like. That is why ordinary people think those texts are all fiction and hearsay. If one performs spiritual and devotional practices, austerities, and the like, all of those texts will surely be revealed as the truth.

A real sadhu will have no self-interest. He only retains enough self-interest to ask: 'How shall I attain faith and devotion to God?' He does not savour the intrigues of the world. One becomes a sadhu to attain peace alone.

He who fears dharma and God is a righteous man. How many people are like this?

It is very difficult to keep devotion, faith, and trust forever in the guru, in sadhus, and in God. That man who has these is truly fortunate. It can be said that God has great compassion for him.

What is the purpose of eating the food received by begging? One has to renounce as crow droppings all praise, all insults, and fear of public disgrace. If one is a renunciate, one need not care for such things. First eat the alms, next repeat God's name. Then his grace will dawn.

There is no happiness in this world. Everything is unsubstantial. In truth, God is the only

essence. Can just anyone understand these words? No one can grasp the meaning of these words without the special grace of God.

The guru and the chosen ideal are one. In the divine play, the One has become many. He is verily Brahman, the primal Shakti, the world, and the jivas. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are but the various forms of the One. The perception of differences arises out of ignorance. For that reason, you must perform spiritual and devotional practices and discern, placing great trust in the guru and the teachings of Vedanta. You must remain deeply devoted to your guru and Ishta, Chosen Ideal. Gradually, the experience that everything is the indivisible Brahman will dawn in your heart. Then you will see him residing in every heart.

The Shastras contain awe-inspiring teachings. What of it? You must substantiate them in your own life—that is spiritual practice.

What is the point of merely receiving a mantra? After receiving the mantra you must work in accordance with the guru's instructions. Then only can the guru's greatness be understood.

Unless one has seen God, the deceptive tendencies of the mind do not stop.

The Master used to say, if you have some means of getting food without cheating or deceiving, eat such harmless food and take his name. By these means you will remain in joy.

Morning, noon, evening, midnight—at any of these four times as you choose—you should regularly practise japa and meditation. Then you will progress quickly in sadhana.

God is undoubtedly essential. Had I not realized the Master of this world, this life would have been futile. Prahlada had pure, unconditional dispassion. Some develop dispassion for a particular reason. Even that is good. It is sufficient, indeed, if one can call upon God for any reason.

After listening to the Bhagavata and other

scriptures, if you try to act in accordance with them, you will surely reap the benefit.

You need to have firm devotion to God. There will surely be pleasure and pain in this world. If you don't forget this, you will feel that everything is auspicious.

What is the use of the mantra that is whispered in the ear? It is not only the mantra. If one has no faith in the mantra, God can never be seen. Is it a small thing to develop devotion and faith in him? Even seeing the affection of one's father and mother, one does not develop devotion to them.

These are monks. They have no certainty of where they will get food; yet what great service they are offering to Til-bhandeshwar [Shiva]! If you see that, you will be amazed. Getting up at four o'clock in the morning in this extreme cold, they take a bath in the Ganga and then worship and read the holy texts. Again, [after] taking bath in the evening they perform worship and the like. Are these trivial acts? I cannot do this. This is only possible if one has the right type of devotion. It is indeed a good fortune to have the chance to serve the deities. He is very fortunate whom God allows to serve him. Not everyone understands this. Many times their attention goes towards money. Considering devotion and liberation to be insignificant, they forget God's service and ask: 'Where is the money? Where is the money?' That is why they suffer so much. I greatly respect the sadhus of Til-bhandeshwar. If one becomes a real sadhu, one becomes like this.

The mind is very restless and naughty. It wants to continuously run here and there. Great vigilance is required to watch where the mind runs. For this reason, meditation, concentration, and holy company are essential. Then the mind becomes calm. Nothing happens unless the mind is calm.

After the Kurukshetra war, when Sri Krishna was going to Dwaraka, Kunti said: 'Oh Krishna, I don't want a kingdom. The delights of the kingdom make one forget [God]. Give me suffering. If I suffer, I will always remember you and see you.' Indeed, at the time of suffering everyone remembers God.

What comes by merely reading books? Realize him through renunciation and austerity.

A monk should stay alert whenever he is in close proximity to householders. One should live in such a way that no doubt regarding the sadhu ever arises in a householder's mind. A monk should engage in intense spiritual and devotional practices. If they [sadhus] are seen doing this, some day or another, the householders will think about how much labour they are putting for God-realization. They will ask themselves: 'What am I doing?' If even for a moment a little awareness comes in one's mind while watching these monks, one's inclination goes towards God. That will surely bring benefit.

The bounty of the garden belongs to the master. The gardener offers that bounty to the master with the utmost care. This reveals the gardener's attitude of service. All of the objects of this world are surely the property of God. We are like his gardeners. Thinking, 'You are the master, I am the servant' and being equipped with devotion and faith, if one lovingly offers to God the things that are already his, such an attitude can be called *dasya*-bhakti [the devotion of a servant].

You only read the Ramayana and Mahabharata the way others read a history book. Look at this eight-year-old boy Bimal. He reads the Ramayana and cries uncontrollably. He tells me: 'See, Maharaj; I was Hanuman in the kingdom of Rama. Is it not true, Maharaj?' I was surprised to hear this. God alone knows what this child has understood!



Sri Ramachandra is God. Can one compare him to any man? A person should surrender everything to him. As much as one offers to him, that much he gets in return. If you give one anna, you will get one anna—give four annas, you will get four—give sixteen, you will regain the full sixteen.

That mother is free who tells her child: 'Realize God. The world is unreal.' Parents are themselves suffering in this world. They also cause their children to suffer. Fortunate indeed are those parents who plainly tell their son: 'You can see how much burning there is in family life. You will suffer if you marry. After understanding this, marry if you like.' That parent is truly liberated. There would be no worries if everyone had such understanding. But due to not understanding this, all troubles arise.

What dharma can a man perform who does not believe in the afterlife? He is an atheist. He is really a non-believer. People meditate and give in charity only because there is an afterlife. He who believes in the afterlife is verily a spiritual person.

One should offer the choicest items to the Master as food offering on special occasions and celebration days. You may ask: 'Where will I get the money?' You find time enough to gather money for other expenses but can't find any money for a good cause. Only then is your attention fixed on the expense. Arranging everyone's photos on your altar, you chant superficially: 'Lord! Lord!' You only pantomime. That is the depth of your devotion! Your Master will remain forever fixed as a photo under glass. All of these rascals are just making an outer show of devotion! I have no such type of devotion.

In whatever way you regard Vishwanath [Shiva], he will be that alone. If you consider him to be a stone, he will be a stone. If you regard him as God, he will be God. The sum and substance of this is that you should not engage in hypocrisy. You get no results because you lack simplicity. If one has the right type of faith and devotion, it will surely bring spiritual benefits.

The man who desires God will dislike pointless activities and useless gossip.

Why do you unnecessarily distress your mind? How many austerities are needed to uplift the mind! Yet now and again, you people become morose and create all kinds of confusion.

Swami Adbhutananda



It is very bad to weaken the mind. Bring great strength in the mind. The mind of one with faith in God is undisturbed by the misery and suffering of this world.

To enjoy the things of this world one must surely sacrifice. It is well known that nothing comes without sacrifice.

### **Lust and Greed**

Worldly people busy themselves with the objects of lust and greed.

People are such fools. Spending so much money, they will file a defamation lawsuit in court but give nothing to a single destitute person who approaches them.

If one is not suffering, simple food and clothing are more than enough. If one has excessive wealth, it becomes an obstacle to remembering and meditating on God. A few fortunate persons understand that wealth invariably causes trouble. Be it your wife, your brother, or your friend, you can never satisfy anyone's mind by giving them money. The more your desire for wealth reduces the better.

Wherever there is an issue of women, there will surely be trouble. Therefore, monks and male devotees who want to realize God should keep their distance from all of them.

Though wealth may procure houses and buildings and make religious ceremonies and sacrifices possible, it is not possible to realize God by means of wealth. God is an object of love. Land, women, and money—these three cause bondage. Without giving these up, one cannot reach God.

Forget about earthly love. This is also the play of maya. Lust and greed cause extreme bondage. They create doubts. They don't allow one to move along the path towards God. Wherever they are, they create strife. He is a *jivanmukta* who can throw these two away.

A man who performs noble acts is indeed an honest man. It is especially difficult to give up attachment to money. It is an offence towards God for one who has money to give nothing to the poor and afflicted. One should only help those who have no money.

After marriage man becomes attached to his wife and children. God is not asking him to cast off his wife and children; but it is bad to become attached. As soon as attachment comes, one suffers.

What good will it do if one obtains initiation from a sadhu? Having no restraint in the least, men have children year after year. Meanwhile, from all external appearances, he appears to be a very good and entirely innocent man. My dear, can such persons attain spirituality at any point of time?

The prostitutes stand loitering dressed in fine clothing and ornaments trying to ensnare in their maya any man who walks nearby. Their bad maya makes the senses restless. They have bewitching powers that can entrance a man. One should keep a distance from them.

My dear, in this world money alone is one's sole relation. A man will do anything for money. A son will put a knife to his own father's throat. Such is the maya of money. Next to money, all of one's relatives, one's in-laws, and even one's own wife become unimportant. Whenever there is money-trouble, all relationships will be broken. Nowadays, abandoning the worship of God, people worship money. Day and night one only thinks: 'Money! Money!' All activities, religious or otherwise, revolve around money.

The teacher Mahendra, Ram Babu, and Deben Babu have performed their family duties under God's command. Entally [Deben Babu's home at Calcutta] is a very holy place. Deben Babu made a very beautiful statement. He told me: 'If the seed of perplexity enters

one's stomach, his understanding is turned upside down.' I couldn't understand this at first. I used to think, what does he mean by the 'seed of perplexity'? After I asked him, he said: 'As long as there is no food or money, the mind stays in God. As soon as some arrangement for food is made, God is forgotten.' That is why he used to speak of food as the 'seed of perplexity'. Deben Babu suffered much. He had no money. Later he had to take a job working for others.

Watch! Be careful around women. I have seen many great sadhus fall after becoming entrapped by women. They show various types of spiritual attitudes at first; but in the end, they destroy everything of the sadhu. That is why the Master used to say: 'Even if women are devoted and honest, don't mix with them too much.' You are young and have a good physique. That is why I say: 'Be careful of women.'

Human bodies are made of flesh and blood. A little sexual desire, anger, and such will be there. There is no need to have an aversion to such things. That is the body's dharma. These activities arise from its very nature.

Householders will show great devotion to a sadhu even to the point of shedding profuse tears. But as soon as he asks for some money, their devotion departs. The Master used to say: 'That is the test of a devotee. Then it can be understood whether a householder has sincere devotion for God or not.' Those who spend money ungrudgingly for God do not even bring into their minds any calculation or hesitancy. They are surely the right type of devotees. Their devotion is genuine. Householders have a deep attachment to money. They may utter many high-sounding words like 'dharma', 'God' and so on; they may flood the place with tears in God's name, but they become hesitant to spend some money for religious purposes.

All the six passions swarm together in

women. Seeing that, a man can become overwhelmed. Take care. If but once they cast their net of maya, there is no way out. They project their maya as it were. For this reason, one should be extremely careful.

If there is a fever in a man's body, whatever he is served tastes sour. Laddu, sandesh, nothing is appealing at all. Likewise, the lustful desire to enjoy the sense objects exists within a man. As a result, japa, austerity, prayer, and such things taste sour. But when a man has no such fever inside, these all taste extremely sweet. The mind easily sits for japa and austerities; maya is unable to create any more distractions.

You may see light a thousand times, but there is no chance of anything happening if one cannot keep brahmacharya.

Nowadays there is no distinction between one who is cultured and one who is uncultured. Wealth has undoubtedly become the foundation of the world. The one having money is considered truly cultured whereas the one lacking money is not.

God desires us to lead lives of purity. Life is surely the same for all. But God loves one whose life is pure. Bhagavan Sri Krishna says: 'Whoever's heart is pure, there I reside. Where is God? People are wandering around. But I am verily there in their hearts. Because they have a wicked character and a corrupted mind they cannot see me.'

Marriage brings nothing but suffering. One may have no earning capacity, or house, or home. Even a minimum-wage job sometimes comes and goes. This is the way it is. Given all this, what gives people the courage to marry? It is the result of their karma.

Youth and wealth—these two are not insignificant. The one who escapes their clutches unscathed has received God's great mercy. That one will be sure to easily cross this ocean of life.

*(To be continued)*

# Svarajya Siddhih: Attaining Self-dominion

Gangadharendra Saraswati

Translated from Sanskrit and annotated by Swami Narasimhananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

पैत्रो लोकोऽधिगम्यः क्रतुभिरधिगतो विद्यया देवलको  
यद्वा चेतःकषायक्षपणमिह तयोः स्मार्तमेवाऽस्तु साध्यम् ।  
यज्ञेनेत्यादिवाक्याद्भवतु विविदिषा तत्फलं वेदनं वा  
ज्ञानादेवाऽमृतत्वं न हि शशकवधूः सिंहपोतं प्रसूत ॥९॥

*Pitrloka*, the worlds of manes, is attained by performing *nitya* and *naimittika* actions. *Devalokāḥ*, the worlds of the gods, are attained by performing (the mental action of) worship. Or the result of that *vidyā*, worship, or action is spoken of in Smritis like: ‘The impurities of attachment and aversion are destroyed through actions, and knowledge is the means of liberation; after the impurities are destroyed through actions, knowledge arises.’<sup>55</sup> (The result is) the destruction of the impurities of the *citta*, mind-stuff. Even if we hold that by the statement, ‘the brahmanas seek to know It through the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, charity, and austerity consisting in a dispassionate enjoyment of sense-objects,’<sup>56</sup> the desire for knowledge, or knowledge itself, is attained, liberation is attained only through knowledge, just as a female hare or a doe can never give birth to a lion cub.

The world of enjoyment, that is the world of the manes like the Aryaman, is attained by the performance of *nitya* and *naimittika* actions. This is established by Vedic statements like: ‘*Karmanā pitrlokaḥ*; the world of manes (is attained) through rites’ (1.5.16). The mental action of worship leads one to the worlds of gods, like those of Indra, Hiranyagarbha, and so forth. This is also supported by Vedic statements like: ‘*Vidyayā devalokaḥ*; the world of the gods (is

attained) through worship’ (ibid.). The ignorant person attains to the world of the worshipped god. This occurs to the person who becomes one with that particular god. Thus the results of actions and worship performed merely through the use of the intellect have been spoken of.

Now the results of actions done with an attitude of offering to the Lord are being told. Such actions purify the mind-stuff by removing various *samskaras* like attachment and aversion, which cause innumerable births. These *samskaras* are further intensified by repeated births. But the knowledge of Brahman alone is the means of attaining liberation.

The performance of Vedic rites, charity, and austerities may lead to the strong desire for knowledge arising as a result of hearing Vedic statements before taking *sannyasa*. This knowledge can be the means of liberation. The performance of *nitya* and *naimittika* actions, like Vedic sacrifices, may also result in such knowledge. The scriptures say: ‘*Sarve vedā yat padam āmananti*; the goal that all the Vedas propound.’<sup>57</sup> By using the *samīyoga-prthaktva nyāya*, the maxim of conjunction and disjunction, the result of the performance of actions may be taken to be the desire for attaining knowledge, or knowledge itself. The *samīyoga-prthaktva nyāya* postulates that two different meanings can be attributed to the same sentence or word depending upon the context. For instance, the word *khādīra* has different



meanings in statements like, '*khādiro yūpo bhavati*; the *khādira* wood can be used for making the sacrificial post', or '*khādiraṁ vīryakāmasya*; *khādira* increases virility'. Similarly, in the present context, by the mental action of worship both the meanings—*vividiṣā*, thirst for knowledge, and the result of such thirst, knowledge itself—are meant.

The word '*vividiṣanti*, seek to know,'<sup>58</sup> is derived from the root *vid*, used here to mean knowledge. The indefinite future tense *ḥ* has been applied with the suffix *san* to mean desire, and thus is derived the meaning 'seek to know'. If in the word '*yajñena*, through sacrifices' (ibid.) the suffix *san* is used to mean desire—due to the prominence of the object of the sentence submitted by the *karana*, instrument—it can be held that the meaning will be 'seeking to know'. If, however, the word *vividiṣā* is used in its natural meaning of knowledge, without the use of any suffix, then it is held that the meaning will be 'knowledge' here. In the sentence 'desires to go to the village by horse' the meaning is brought about by the logical connection of the instrument 'horse', with the natural meaning of 'going'.

In conclusion, it is being held that by showing a different interpretation—not only due to the lack of a plausible argument or evidence but also due to the inability of actions—actions cannot cause liberation. Immortality or one's true nature of being deathless—the realization of the nectar-like supremely blissful nature of the Atman, also called *kaivalya*—is brought about only by the knowledge of Brahman and not by any other means. Actions cause only the accumulation of fruits of actions, which are exhaustible. They do not manifest the ever-established, supremely blissful Atman. Suppose a person is wearing a golden chain around the neck and forgetting this thinks that the chain is lost. The golden chain cannot be regained even by performing a thousand actions; it is gained only by the knowledge

that it is and was around the neck all the time. For this no action is necessary, knowledge is sufficient. There is another illustration: A female hare, a small animal with long ears, runs in fear at the slightest rustling of dry leaves. The playful lion cub is capable of crushing the frontal lobes of a mad elephant. With such a big difference in their traits the female hare cannot give birth to a lion cub. Similarly, small prayers and other actions giving smaller results, of destroying the effects of small mistakes, cannot lead to liberation from the beginningless bondage. As taught in the scriptures: 'Even the gods cannot prevail against him, for he becomes their Atman' (I.4.10), after the advent of the knowledge of the Self, even Brahma and other gods cannot create bondage. Only knowledge can remove bondage.

The different qualifications needed for performing actions and attaining knowledge of Brahman are being described, and the contradictions between such qualifications are shown to denounce those who hold the conjunction of actions and the knowledge of Brahman.

अर्थी दक्षो द्विजोऽहं बुध इति मतिमान् कर्मसूक्तोऽधिकारी  
शान्तो दान्तः परिब्राडुपरमपरमो ब्रह्मविद्याऽधिकारी ।  
इत्थं भेदे विवक्षन् समुदितमुभयं मुक्तिहेतुं सुशीतं  
नीरं वैश्वानरं चोभयमहह तृषोच्छेदकामः पिबेत्सः ॥१०॥

[It is mentioned in the Mimamsa texts that] only a person who has the pride of 'I am wealthy', 'I am an able person', 'I am twice-born', 'I am a scholar' is fit for performing actions. [According to Vedanta] only a sannyasin who has controlled his external and internal organs and is free from impurities like attachment and aversion is fit for the knowledge of Brahman. Though such distinction [is found in the scriptures], the person who wishes to hold that both [actions and the knowledge of Brahman] together are the means of liberation, is like a person who, desirous of quenching thirst, drinks both cold water and fire.

One who is skilled in earning a livelihood by performing the duties of one's caste in society, has enough wealth to perform Vedic sacrifices, and is desirous of obtaining the results of such sacrifices, is a wealthy person. An able person is one who can perform Vedic rites without the assistance of priests and other people. The twice-born belong to the first three castes of society: brahmana, kshatriya, and vaishya. These three castes have the ritual of *yajñopavita*, investiture with the sacred thread, when one is considered to have had a second birth. A scholar is one who has studied the Vedas and the Mimamsa philosophy propounded by Jaimini and has understood the meaning of the Karma Kanda, the portion of the Vedas dealing with rituals. Apart from being proud of being wealthy, able, twice-born, or a scholar, one can be proud of belonging to a higher caste among the twice-born, being of advanced age, or belonging to a particular place or time. A person with such pride alone is fit for doing actions.

One who is free from attachment and aversion, has controlled the mind and senses, moves about having renounced everything, properly studies the Vedas and becomes a *paramahansa*, and does not engage in any activity other than the preservation of the body for listening to Vedic dicta is alone best fit for attaining the knowledge of Brahman. The Smritis say: 'There is no wealth of a brahmana like unity, equanimity, truthfulness, moral character, austerity, carrying the staff of renunciation, and straightforwardness—these are great in that order.' A person having these qualities is the best among human beings and is fit for the knowledge of Brahman.

It is well known that the qualifications for performing Vedic rituals and for attaining the knowledge of Brahman are very different. Yet, some people claim that the conjunction of these two is the means of liberation. Their condition is like that of a person who wants to quench his

thirst by consuming cold water and fire, as it were, at the same time. This is the plight of a fool who is ignorant of the opposites. Cold water and fire cannot go together, as water destroys fire and there is no use of fire in quenching thirst, rather it increases it. Similarly, actions and the knowledge of Brahman cannot coexist, as the knowledge of Brahman destroys actions, and on the arising of this knowledge actions become useless. Actions bind rather than cause liberation.

Objection: Let it be held that knowledge alone is the condition for liberation. But, one does not find any system supporting the position that the knowledge of Brahman is the means of liberation. The followers of Sankhya and Patanjali hold that the knowledge of the difference between Prakriti and Purusha is the means of liberation. The possessing of fourteen special qualities like *buddhi*, intellect, endowed with the knowledge of the characteristics of and the difference between sixteen or seven entities causes the dawn of knowledge, according to the followers of Gautama [Naiyayikas] and Kanada [Vaisheshikas]. The Pashupatas believe that liberation is caused by the knowledge of the difference between *paśu*, the created, and *pāśupati*, the Lord of creation, who is the cause. The followers of Bhartṛprapancha believe that liberation is caused by the realization of Brahman, which is brought about by the understanding that the effect and cause are the part and the whole. This further helps one comprehend both the identity of and the difference between Brahman and the universe. This also gives the *saprapañca*, cosmic, and *niṣprapañca*, acosmic, understandings of Reality. The Bhartṛprapancha school believes that in this manner one understands that Brahman is both identical with the universe and different from it. The Advaitins hold that liberation is attained upon the realization of Brahman, which is one's true nature and is Satchidananda, absolute,

independent, unchanging, and without a second.

The view of Bhartriprapancha is being explained here. Bhartriprapancha lived before Acharya Shankara, and he may be the same person mentioned as Bodhayana. Shankara refers to Bhartriprapancha's thoughts in his commentary on the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Bhartriprapancha's philosophy is called *bhedābheda-advaita*; Bhaskara was also an adherent of this school. *Bhedābheda-advaita* is the relation between Brahman and the jiva on one hand and Brahman and the world on the other hand—this is a relation of identity-in-difference. According to this view, both jiva and the world evolve out of Brahman, and so this doctrine is also called *brahma-pariṇāma-vāda*. Brahman is transformed into the *antaryāmin*, inner controller, and the jiva. On the physical side, Brahman is transformed into *avyakta*, unmanifest, *sūtra*, subtle universal person, *virāj*, gross aspect of the universal person, and *devatā*, deity, which are all *saprapaṇca*; and *jāti*, genus, and *piṇḍa*, species, which are *niṣprapaṇca*. These are various modes of Brahman and are the eight classes into which the variegated universe is divided. They are again classified into three *rāśis*, groups: *paramātmārāśi*, *jīva rāśi*, and *mūrttāmūrtta rāśi*, corresponding to god, soul, and matter.

Bhartriprapancha recognises *pramāṇa-samuccaya*, which means that the testimony of common experience is quite as valid as that of the Vedas. He upholds *jñāna-karma-samuccaya*, the conjunction of actions and knowledge. According to him, since Reality is a unity within differences, differences are as true as the unity. Duties or actions have to be performed even after attaining knowledge. Hence, both actions and knowledge are necessary. Liberation is attained by achieving Self-knowledge followed by the performance of selfless actions. This view gives equal importance to Self-knowledge and the performance of rites,

which have been prescribed by the Vedas. Here the extremes—that only knowledge leads to liberation, as believed by the Advaitins, or that only actions lead to liberation, as believed by the Mīmamsakas—are avoided. The ultimate truth is *dvaitādvaita*, duality in non-duality. Liberation is achieved in two stages. The first stage is *apavarga*, emancipation, where *saṁsāra* is overcome by overcoming *āsaṅga*, attachment, and the second stage is leading to Brahmanhood through the dispelling of *avidyā*.<sup>59</sup>

In this manner different schools hold different kinds of knowledge as means of liberation and also stipulate contradictory methods to attain this knowledge. It is difficult to decide which position to accept and which to discard. It is also not logical to hold that the opinion of the Advaitins alone is proper. The Advaitins hold that upon hearing the Vedic dicta the aspirant gets an immediate indubitable knowledge, realizes Brahman, and does not again come into the transmigratory cycle of births and deaths.

Reply: It may be contented that the various stands regarding the means of liberation posited by different schools sometimes go against experience and make futile exercises like contemplation. This leads to hopelessness. This contention is countered in the next verse.

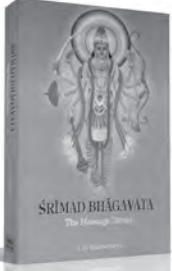
(To be continued)

## References

55. 'Kaṣāyapaktiḥ karmāṇi jñānaṁ tu paramāgatiḥ. Kaṣāye karmabhiḥ pakve tato jñānaṁ prajāyate', quoted by Acharya Shankara in his commentary on *Brahma Sutra*, 3.4.26.
56. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.4.22.
57. *Katha Upanishad*, .2.15.
58. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.4.22.
59. See Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1952), 2.43–4.100 and *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, ed. Karl H Potter, 13 vols (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), 3.40.

# REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,  
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



## **Śrīmad Bhāgavata: The Message Divine** A D Bhattacharya

Akshaya Prakashan, 208, M G House,  
2 Community Centre, Wazirpur In-  
dustrial Area, Delhi 110 052. Website:  
[www.akshayaprakashan.com](http://www.akshayaprakashan.com). 2010.  
200 pp. ₹ 250.

An avatara inspires many generations through a renewal and restatement of the spiritual core of religion. And with every religious revival there is also an efflorescence in the arts, culture, and literature. The inspiration changes large portions of humanity, and every aspect of life witnesses a kind of evolutionary leap. Sri Krishna, the enchanter of the cowherds of Vrindaban, is one such avatara whose influence remains undiminished even after thousands of years.

Sri Ramakrishna had a unique experience: a ray of light emanating from his body proceeded to connect the image of Sri Krishna, in the temple of Radhakanta at Dakshineswar, and the Bhagavata. Sri Ramakrishna would often narrate this wonderful vision and conclude that Bhagavan, bhakta—devotee—and the Bhagavata are one. By this vision Sri Ramakrishna also revealed that the Bhagavata can connect us to God.

The Bhagavata is devotedly read and repeated by Hindus all over India and is often quoted by scholars to substantiate their various philosophical standpoints. This scripture is the most popular among the eighteen Mahapuranas, principal Puranas. Like other Puranas, which extol a particular deity, the Bhagavata eulogizes Vasudeva as the supreme Godhead. However, it is not sectarian, for it attracts all types of devotees by its sublimity. It is interesting to note that the Alvars of South India—adepts in devotion to Vishnu—corroborated the veracity of this scripture by their exemplary lives and through them a whole tradition of the Bhagavata cult arose.

Vyasa, the great sage who composed all the eighteen Puranas, is said to be the Bhagavata's author. Tradition has it that even after extolling the glories of various gods through seventeen Puranas, Vyasa felt that he had not attained the purpose of his life. The divine sage Narada then instructed him to compose the Bhagavata, through which Vyasa attained fulfilment. This, in fact, was the culmination of all his previous works. While devotion takes precedence over other paths in the Bhagavata, the path of jnana is also emphasized. The Sanskrit of this text is praised for its poetic richness.

There are many reliable English translations of the Bhagavata, but they are voluminous and therefore tend to inhibit the general reader. Besides, most of them conform to the traditional method of explaining each verse, reducing thereby the charm of the narrative. By avoiding these two factors the translator of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata: The Message Divine* has produced a readable and complete narrative of the important episodes of the scripture. With frequent quotes of the most popular verses, the translator aims at keeping alive in each page the devotional aspect of the epic.

The translation is faithful and the English lucid. The translator, who has many books on Indian culture and spirituality to his credit, is a qualified Electrical and Mechanical Engineer and an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.

*Swami Atmajnananda*  
Ramakrishna Math, Chennai



## **Light of Knowledge: Jyotibhushan Bhattacharya Commemoration Volume**

Ed. Biswanath Maji

Radiance, 206 Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata  
700 006. 2012. 224 pp. ₹ 250.



The charismatic Professor of English Jyotibhushan Bhattacharya was an intellectual and a good speaker. Head of the Department and Dean of Arts at Calcutta University before retiring from academic life, the Professor was a committed Marxist and during 1967–70 served as a minister of the Government of West Bengal. He remained a legendary teacher to generations of students for his capacity to combine Marxism with humanistic literary studies. This book is a tribute to this stalwart by his erstwhile student Biswanath Maji.

The volume is a collection of essays divided into four sections. The first nine essays in his honour, written by eminent colleagues and admirers, cover a wide variety of subjects. Birendranath Chowdhury's essay unravels a critique of commerce in the themes, imagery, and ambivalent moral vision of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. Jasodhara Bagchi builds upon De Quincey's distinction between 'literature of power' and 'literature of knowledge' and explores the colonial dichotomy of English literature in Bengal. Dipendu Chakraborty's imaginary dialogues draw attention to postcolonial paradoxes over the 'white man's burden' approved even by Marx, though not quite for the same reasons. Biswanath Maji evaluates the 'creative Marxism' of Bhattacharya in his major writings in relation to his political activities. Following Umberto Eco, Tirthankar Chattopadhyay rereads Joyce's politics and language in the light of his 'appreciation' of Thomas Aquinas's ability to express the profound in everyday terms. Ramkrishna Bhattacharya's essay explores the logic of 'multiple closure', which is remarkably consistent across space and time, by comparing stories with similar plots from *Arabian Nights* and *Hitopadesha* with a colonial English short story. Hemingway's 'consistently inconsistent' political idealism, ideology, and individualism, which continued to disturb his professed retirement, are discussed by Sanjukta Dasgupta, while reminding us of Professor Bhattacharya's own predicament. Krishna Sen describes the changing treatment of the 'Orestes Myth' in classical Greek tragedy and its modern renditions; his intention is to show how in the post-Marx era it is no longer the reform of a community but the isolation of the individual

that becomes its idea. Gautam Ghoshal reads Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* as a text that bridges the gap between the spheres of spirit and matter respectively in the works of Dante and Shakespeare.

The second section is a series of reminiscences: Buroshiva Dasgupta remembers Professor Bhattacharya as an extraordinary teacher, even though some academics felt he wasted his talents by joining politics; Sumita Naskar and Sandipan Sen recall the unforgettable experience of Bhattacharya's *King Lear* classes, in which all the characters come alive; R K Dasgupta's letter 'Nandantattva O Marxbad' is an acknowledgement of the depth and range of Bhattacharya's scholarship on Marxist literature.

The third section consists of Bhattacharya's unpublished MA thesis on 'Angus Wilson—Three Novels', submitted to the Leeds University in 1961.

The fourth section comprises essays written by Professor Bhattacharya himself. The synopsis of two lectures on *King Lear* and *Macbeth* may be useful for those who are not able to understand how a belief in Marxism can open up a profound vision of the tragic hero. Since Bhattacharya preferred to publish his writings in Bengali, with no effort to embellish the notes he made for his lectures in English, the reader will get a true taste of his brilliance and originality in the meditations entitled 'Problem of Evil in Modern English Literature', 'A Note on Waste Land', and 'A Note on the Byzantine Poems of W B Yeats'. As far as his practical contributions as a committed educationist is concerned, Bhattacharya's observations in 'Education and Democracy in India Today', 'Teaching of English in the School-Stage in West Bengal Bengali Medium Schools', and 'Marx and Education: A Synopsis' are still of substantial relevance.

The preface and timeline appended to the volume provide detailed information about the 'different directions' of Bhattacharya's life. The volume could have been more of a treasure if most of the articles in the first section were not reprints. But on the whole the book is a very careful and caring labour of love.

Dr Chandreyee Niyogi

Reader, Department of English, Jadavpur University,  
Kolkata

# REPORTS

## Commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

In connection with the commemoration of Swamiji's 150th birth anniversary two types of 'Sustained Graded Value Education Programme', especially for youths, have been recently undertaken by the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. Type A (Classroom-based) Programme consists of value education classes given twice a week to students in their schools and based on prescribed books. Type B (Non-formal) Programme, conducted in centres of the Ramakrishna Order or in other institutions, includes prayer, meditation, devotional singing, chanting of Swamiji's Swadesh Mantra, moral lessons, question-answer session, audio-visual session, yoga-sanas, and other activities. In all, 827 teachers have been trained to conduct these programmes. The progress report of the programmes is as follows:

Programme	Target	Undertaken	Students	Beneficiaries	No. of states
Type A	2,000 units	1,783 units*	78,940	495 schools	14
Type B	500 units	261 units	11,094	171 institutions	12

\* A batch of 30 to 50 students is considered one unit

The following centres organized various programmes. **Agartala:** Talks on value education in 8 colleges from 4 August to 3 September 2012, attended by about 3,600 people, mostly students. **Baranagar Mission:** Girl students' convention on 16 September, in which 378 girl students from 21 schools along with 168 parents and 12 teachers took part; a youth convention at Singur on 8 September, in which 705 delegates participated; and talks on value education in 8 schools and 3



'World Meet for Peace and Harmony' at Delhi

colleges in September, attended by 1,841 students. **Belgaum:** Quiz contests in 5 schools in September, in which 451 students took part. **Chengalpattu:** Processions, devotional music, and film shows on Swamiji at Kollampakam, Malai-Medu, Vilankadu, Thandalam, Neerpair, Manamai (J V Nagar), Bowndhan-Karanai, Padalam Kutu Road, Elumichampattu, and Anur on 25 and 26 August and 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, and 23 September respectively. **Chennai Math:** Launching of a 3D website <[www.vivekananda3d.org](http://www.vivekananda3d.org)> and a stereoscopic 3D short movie on Swamiji's historic Chicago address on 16 September. **Chennai Mission:** The four Mission centres in Chennai (Mission Ashrama, Sarada Vidyalyaya, Students' Home, and Vidyapith) jointly held a parliament of religions on the premises of the Matriculation Higher

Secondary School of Chennai Mission Ashrama on 11 September; nearly 2,000 people attended the programme. **Coimbatore Mission:** The final round of the oratorical competitions on Swamiji's Chicago addresses was held on 10 September; about 1,429 students participated in it. **Delhi:** 'World Meet for Peace and Harmony' on 11 and 12 September, in which His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, Dr Karan Singh, and several other distinguished speakers from

different parts of the world addressed the gathering; about 1,300 delegates participated on each day. The centre also conducted a classical vocal music recital by two eminent artistes on 23 September. **Hyderabad:** A retreat for 150 auto drivers of the city on 15 August. Launching of Vivekananda Ratha Yatra (procession with Vivekananda carriage) and a mobile exhibition on Swamiji on 11 September—the carriage will travel all over the state of Andhra Pradesh for 16 months, covering nearly 200 villages, towns, district headquarters, and so forth. Public meeting on 11 September on the premises of Mahboob College, Secunderabad, where Swamiji gave a public lecture on 13 February 1893; about 4,000 students and devotees attended the meeting. A retreat for 180 bus drivers and conductors on 16 September. **Institute of Culture, Kolkata:** Youth convention at Kshudiram Anushilan Kendra, Kolkata, on 15 and 16 September, in which about 2,300 rural students from 14 districts of West Bengal took part. Swami Suhitananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, presided over the inaugural session. **Jamshedpur:** Football tournament from 6 to 29 August, in which students of 8 schools of the centre took part. **Kanchipuram:** Talks on Swamiji's life and message in 4 colleges and 2 schools from 3 to 5 September, attended by nearly 2,500 students and 50 teachers. **Lucknow:** Inauguration of 'Swami Vivekananda Centre for Youth Counselling and Positive Thinking' on 1 September. **Madurai:** A public meeting on 11 September, attended by about 1,000 people, and a youth convention on 12 September, in which nearly 1,500 people, mostly college students, participated. **Mangalore:** Seminars from 24 to 26 September, inaugurated by three ministers of the Government of Karnataka—Sri C T Ravi, minister for Higher Education, Sri Kota Srinivas Poojary, minister for Port and Inland Water Development, and Miss Shobha Karandlaje, minister

for Energy; about 1,600 college students attended the seminars. Talks on Swamiji in 6 colleges in and around Mangalore from 21 to 26 September, attended by nearly 1,800 students. **Muzaffarpur:** On 11 September Sri Nikhil Kumar, governor of Nagaland, released nine books in Hindi published by the print-media committee; about 700 people attended the programme. **Palai:** Youth convention on 21 September, in which 130 youths took part. **Patna:** A programme on 11 September on Swamiji's Chicago addresses. **Purulia:** Inter-school football tournament, in which students from 16 schools of Jangal Mahal area took part—the final match was played on the Vidya-pith ground on 9 September—and conferences on 9 and 10 September, attended by about 600 students. **Rajkot:** On 19 September Swami Suhitananda and Sri Vajubhai Vala, finance minister of Gujarat, released 17 books in Gujarati on Swamiji's life and teachings and on value education; on the same day, Swami Suhitananda inaugurated the newly set-up exhibition on Swamiji at the ashrama. **Ranchi Morabadi:** Cultural competitions from 29 July to 2 September, in which 4,000 students took part, and an inter-faith meet on 11 September, attended by about 300 people. **Salem:** Talks on Swamiji in 3 colleges in September, attended by about 900 students. **Swamiji's Ancestral House, Kolkata:** In a function held at the ashrama on 1 September Justice Ashok Kumar Ganguly, Chairperson, West Bengal Human Rights Commission, released 132 books in English and Hindi, most of them on value education; Swami Suhitananda presided over the programme. A conference was held on 11 September, in which nearly 700 people took part. Three talks on Swamiji at the ashrama from 30 August to 17 September, attended by about 1,400 people. Besides, at the initiative of the centre, the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, conducted a seminar on 19 September on the relevance of

Swamiji's message; nearly 400 people, mostly staff and researchers of the Institute, attended the programme. **Toronto** (Canada): A cultural programme on 8 September, attended by about 500 people.

### **News from Branch Centres**

**Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Chandigarh**, launched Viveka Vahini, a mobile bookstall, on 9 September.

At **Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi**, His Holiness the Dalai Lama inaugurated the newly set-up permanent exhibition on Swami Vivekananda on 11 September, and Swami Suhitananda inaugurated the new 3D theatre and released a 3D stereoscopic animation film on Swami Vivekananda on 12 September.

**Ramakrishna Math, Vrindaban**, held a four-day programme, from 12 to 15 September, in connection with the 125th anniversary of the Holy Mother's visit to Vrindaban and the consecration of the Ma Sarada Kutir, popularly known as Kala Babu's Kunj. A newly built guest house and a permanent exhibition on the Holy Mother on the premises of the Kutir were inaugurated on 12 September. Swami Suhitananda presided over the public meeting held at the centre on the following day. Discourses and a pilgrimage to nearby holy places were conducted on the last two days. In all, about 1,200 devotees and 150 monastics attended the programme.

Swami Suhitananda inaugurated the new bookstall at **Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot**, on 19 September.

The renovated temple, with a newly installed marble image of Sri Ramakrishna, at **Ramakrishna Math, Coimbatore**, was consecrated on 19 September. Special worship, public meetings, and a spiritual retreat were conducted from 18 to 20 September. About 90 monastics and 3,600 devotees attended the three-day programme.

All the 78 students of the College of Education at **Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, Rahara**, who appeared in the B.Ed. examination conducted by West Bengal State University in 2012 passed the examination with first division marks; one of them secured the first rank in the state.

### **Achievements**

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous body under University Grants Commission, has awarded 'A' grade to the college at **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur**, for another five years.

The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, has awarded 'A' grade to Rural Self Employment Training Institute, Samaj Sevak Shikshanamandira, a unit of **Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur Math**, for the year 2011–12.

Sri Snehashish Pathak, a teacher of the school at **Ramakrishna Mission, Narottam Nagar**, was presented with the National Award to Teachers—comprising a certificate, a silver medal, and 25,000 rupees—by Sri Pranab Mukherjee, president of India, at a function held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, on 5 September, the National Teachers' Day.

### **Relief**

**Distress Relief** • **Garbeta** centre distributed 55 saris, 250 shirts, 250 pants, and 700 assorted garments among 1,500 needy people of nearby areas.

**Flood Relief** • **Narottam Nagar** centre distributed 350 agricultural sprayers among an equal number of flood-affected farmers of Jorhat district on 23 September. **Dehradun** centre continued its flood relief work in Bhatwari area of Uttarkashi district by distributing 708 kg rice, 776 kg dal, 61 kg salt, 94 l cooking oil, 152 packets of biscuits, 11 kg milk powder, 88 kg sugar, 1,428 matchboxes, 100 blankets, and 40 sweaters among 388 families belonging to 7 villages in the affected district from 28 August to 4 September.





## WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Abhedananda in India (in 1906)	100.00
An Introduction to the Philosophy of Panchadasi	10.00
A Study of Heliocentric Science	75.00
Attitude of Vedanta Towards Religion	25.00
Bhagavad Gita, the Divine Message (in 2 parts)	300.00
Christian Science and Vedanta	10.00
Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda (eleven vols.)	2000.00
Divine Heritage of Man	40.00
Doctrine of Karma	60.00
Epistles	98.00
Goddess Durga : The Divine Energy	15.00
Great Saviours of the World	100.00
How to be a Yogi	60.00
Human Affection and Divine Love	15.00
Ideal of Education	25.00
India and Her People	35.00
Leaves From My Diary	50.00
Life Beyond Death	80.00
My Life Story	98.00
Mystery of Death	120.00
Path of Realization	60.00

Ramakrishna Kathamrita and Ramakrishna	70.00
Reincarnation	60.00
Religion of the 20th Century	15.00
Religion, Revelation and God	80.00
Religion of the 20th Century	15.00
Science of Psychic Phenomena	60.00
Self-Knowledge	60.00
Steps Towards Perfection	20.00
Songs Divine	25.00
Spiritual Sayings of Ramakrishna	65.00
Spiritual Unfoldment	25.00
Swami Vivekananda and His Work	7.00
Thoughts on Philosophy and Religion	60.00
Thoughts on Sankhya, Buddhism and Vedanta	50.00
True Psychology	80.00
Universal Religion and Vedanta	50.00
Why a Hindu Accepts Christ and Rejects Churchianity	15.00
Women's Place in Hindu Religion	5.00
Works of Swami Abhedananda (in 2 parts) Abridged	500.00
Yoga, Its Theory and Practice	80.00
Yoga Psychology	100.00
Vedanta Philosophy	15.00

## WORKS OF SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

An Enquiry into Psychology, Soul and Absolute	70.00
Christ the Saviour and Christ Myth	140.00
Form and Function of Music in Ancient India (2 vols.)	700.00
History of Indian Music (2 vols.)	250.00
Is a Jivanmukta Subject to Ignorance	45.00
Music of the South Asian Peoples	250.00
Music of The Nations	80.00

Philosophy of Progress and Perfection	70.00
Sangitasara Samgraha of Sri Ghanasyamadasa	50.00
Thoughts on Yoga, Upanishad and Gita	70.00
The Philosophical Ideas of Swami Abhedananda	100.00
The Social and Historical Values of Ragas and Raginis	200.00



## RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA MATH PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT

19A & B, RAJA RAJKRISHNA STREET, KOLKATA-700 006, INDIA

☎ : (033) 2555 7300 & 2555-8292

*Have you heard of the ICE Awards?*

**It has something for you.**

**Curious?**



**visit**

***www.iceawards.in***

*A Shailaja Nair Foundation Initiative*



*Title sponsors*

## **The Practice of Religion**

**By Swami Vivekananda**

One of the contributions of Swami Vivekananda was to single out the essence of all religions and distinguish it from the non-essentials. 'Religion is realisation', he said. In his lecture 'The Practice of Religion' he points out that we need to be dynamic and practise spiritual disciplines instead of being content with lifeless theories and dogmas. Considering the importance of this lecture, we are now publishing it as a separate booklet and hope that the readers will greatly benefit out of it.



**Pages: 32 | Packing & Postage (In India Only): ₹ 25 | Price: ₹ 8**



Please write to:

**ADVAITA ASHRAMA, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kc**

Phones: 91-33-22644000 / 22640898 / 22866483, E-mail: [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)

# *Kamarpukur and Jayrambati*

by Swami Tejasananda



Sri Ramakrishna and his consort, Sri Sarada Devi, were prophets, unparalleled in the history of spirituality, who have left us a legacy of religious harmony and love much needed in the present era. The places where they were born, Kamarpukur and Jayrambati, bear witness to the unique phenomenon of their lives—lives of intense spiritual realization and universal love. The soil, stones, trees, air, and streams of these two pilgrimage centres continue to remind us that here once walked divinities on earth. These places invite us to take a dip in the ocean of spirituality and merge with the source of infinite bliss. This book is a combined edition of two booklets, Holy Kamarpukur and Holy Jayrambati, published by the centres of the Ramakrishna Order at Kamarpukur and Jayrambati.

Pages: 76 | Packing & Postage: ₹ 30 | Price: ₹ 50

# *Ancient Sages*

by Swami Satyamayananda

While the present generation works hard for a better future, we should not forget our glorious past and spiritual legacy, as it is pride in our ancestors that inspires us to strive to create a better country for those coming after us. That is why we need to become familiar with the lives of these ancient sages, and it is also why we should pass on this legacy to the coming generations. It is with this in mind that we present this book to our readers. Indian mythology is replete with accounts of sages and seers, so some of these stories have been presented here in a short form.



Pages 224 | Price ₹ 60  
Packing & Postage: ₹ 35



Please write to:

**ADVAITA ASHRAMA, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India**

Phones: 91-33-22644000 / 22640898 / 22866483, E-mail: [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)



# LET US BUILD A HOSPITAL

A branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, this centre runs the oldest Eye Infirmary in Bihar. Now we are constructing an Eye, ENT, Dental Hospital cum Diagnostic Centre to cater to the needs of the poor and deserving local population.

**Present Infrastructure:** Oldest Eye Infirmary (thirty-bedded) in North Bihar established in 1947, with departments of General dispensary, Dental, Homeopathy, X-Ray, Pathology, now dilapidated. Newly purchased Ophthalmic equipment like Yag, Green Laser, Fundus Camera, Perimeter, Phaco etc are being used regularly. No. of OPD patients increased from 50 to 140 daily, OPD hours increased from 3 hours to 6 hours. Daily evening Eye Surgery, 3 residential surgeons all the time.

**Our Vision:** Speciality in Eye, ENT and Dentistry, Various OPD Sections, Well equipped Operation Theatres, Clinical Lab, R & D Section, Modern Diagnostics, Paramedical Training, and Doctors' and Staff Quarters.

## **Cost of First Phase**

<b>of Construction:</b>	Construction of Medical Building (13,000 sq. ft.) (Remaining)	₹ 50 lakh
	Construction of Doctors' Quarters	₹ 60 lakh
	Equipment and Maintenance	₹ 65 lakh
	Permanent Fund	₹ 1 crore

**Work in Progress:** Foundation stone laid on 1 January 2011 (Kalpataru Day). Foundation work completed on 30 June 2011. Plinth work completed in December 2011. Roof casting done.

We earnestly appeal to you to donate liberally towards the development of the infrastructure of health for the poor. Your contribution may be sent through cheque/DD/MO favouring 'Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muzaffarpur' or by transferring the amount to SBI A/c. No.10877071752; IFS Code : SBIN0006016 with an intimation by email. All donations are exempt from the Income tax under section 80G of the Income Tax Act. Your contribution towards the project for a place like Muzaffarpur, Bihar where health infrastructure is very poor and people deserve your help will be palpably a real homage to Swami Vivekananda whose heart bled for poor humanity.

Swami Bhavatmananda  
Secretary



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA

(A branch centre of Ramakrishna Mission, PO Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, West Bengal)

Swami Vivekananda Path, Bela, Muzaffarpur, Bihar-843 116, Phone: 0621-2272127 / 2272963 E-mail: [rkm.muzaffarpur@gmail.com](mailto:rkm.muzaffarpur@gmail.com) Website: [www.rkmmuzaffarpur.org](http://www.rkmmuzaffarpur.org)



# **CHICAGO ADDRESSES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

## ***An Audiobook***



Produced by Advaita Ashrama in collaboration with Saregama Ltd, this is an audiobook containing readings of the addresses of Swami Vivekananda delivered at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893. It contains the comments of various thinkers on Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions and an introduction to the audiobook. The speeches have been read by Sri Biplab Ganguli. The comments have been read by Sri Masoodul Haq and the introduction has been given by Swami Atmarupananda.

Price: ₹ 99 | Packing & Postage: ₹ 50

# **STRENGTH IS LIFE**

## ***Ebooks by Swami Vivekananda***

This CD contains the e-book files of six books by Swami Vivekananda: *Buddha and His Message*, *Personality Development*, *Essentials of Hinduism*, *Chicago Addresses*, *My Idea of Education*, *Rebuild India*. All popular e-book formats are included and these files can be read in nearly all e-book readers and tablets. Containing an user-friendly interface this disk can be used in Windows and Mac Operating Systems.



Price ₹ 100  
Packing & Postage: ₹ 50



Please write to:

**ADVAITA ASHRAMA, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India**

Phones: 91-33-22644000 / 22640898 / 22866483, E-mail: [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)



## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, KADAPA

*(A branch Centre of Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math)*

Putlampalli, Near RIMS Hsopital, Kadapa 516002, Ph: 200120, 200633

City Centre: Ramakrishna Math, Trunk Road, Kadapa, 516001, Ph 241633

Email: kadapamath@yahoo.com • Web site: www.rkm-kadapa.org

## A TEMPLE OF PEACE

By the grace of the Holy Trio, the Universal Temple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna at Kadapa is nearing completion, Though initially the cost was estimated at ₹ 140 lakh, now we have to spend an additional ₹ 20 lakh to complete it. It has been decided to perform the consecration of the temple along with installation of the marble image of Sri Ramakrishna on Thursday, 22nd November 2012 (the sacred Jagaddhatri Puja Day). In this connection a four-day programme will be held from 20th to 23rd November. We welcome all the devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna to the celebrations.

Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice President of Ramakrishna Order has kindly agreed to perform the consecration ceremony. We expect about 250 sadhus and brahmacharis and around 5000 devotees (2000 from outside Kadapa) for the function which would include Vastu Homa, Special Pujas, bhajans, and cultural programmes, processions of sadhus and devotees, discourses by monks and eminent persons, and the publication of a souvenir. The estimated cost of these celebrations is ₹ 45 lakh, We appeal to all the devotees and admirers to generously contribute towards this noble event and make it a grand and memorable occasion.

Your contributions through Cheques or DDs drawn in favour of Ramakrishna Mission, Kadapa, payable at Cuddapah (old spelling still in use in banks!) may be sent to the above address. You can also use the E-transfer facility to remit to our bank account. Details for bank transfer are: Ramakrishna Mission A/c No 30186936408, State Bank of India RIMS Branch, Cuddapah Bank code: SBIN 0010107. Please intimate us the donor's name and address soon after the e-transfer is complete for reconciliation and issue of the receipt by us.

Swami Atmavidananda  
Secretary

